

IIMA Anthology 2003-2021, volume 4

# Improvisation congresses

ISBN 87-91425-19-0 (Vol.1-8)

ISBN 87-91425-11-5 (Vol.4)

## GENERAL PREFACE TO THE IIMA ANTHOLOGY

The IIMA Anthology collects some of the most unique and important contributions to International Improvised Music Archive. IIMA is an internet archive founded 2003 by Carl Bergstroem-Nielsen, Denmark. The present Anthology was not meant to replace the site which hosts a number of other contributions and links, but to act as a signpost and an extra reserve for preservation of some rare works. The site features more authors and possibly more by the individual authors than included here, so I can warmly recommended to find it by internet search.

The motivation behind IIMA was to make both a number of instructional scores / graphic scores / open compositions / compositions for improvisors /etc. easily available - and some theoretical texts, both as a supplement to what is available elsewhere.

*For navigating:* as a starting-point, disregard the hypertexts (although a few might work). Scroll and use the index table. Contents were pasted from the individual HTML pages in the web version or recreated from archived files. Do not hesitate to use the standard search function within the document, in order to move from the index section to the item in question – or to browse for names, etc. This is possible to a large extent because much of the content (not all, though) is rendered in text, not graphics format. Care has been taken to make everything well accessible and readable, but please observe peculiarities such as the above ones.

None of my own creative and research output is included here apart from some composer portraits and translation work (I was born 1951 in DK) but I suppose it will be available through internet search.

All works appeared in IIMA by permission.

Carl Bergstroem-Nielsen

## VOLUME 4, Improvisation Congress Materials

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*Apologies for the poor quality in the beinning of the Agosto paper that had to be done by screenshots - the pdf at the IIMA site is better.*

# INTERNATIONAL IMPROVISED MUSIC ARCHIVE - IMPROVISATION SYMPOSIUMS/CONGRESSES

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Various authors.

[Vs. Improvisation, Prague 2014](#)

[Improvisation Across Borders, San Diego 1999](#)

[LaDonna Smith: Impressions from IAB, San Diego 1999](#)

Includes a keynote address by Pauline Oliveros.

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Announcements and abstracts from

Vs. Interpretation Festival and

Symposium, July 16-20, 2014

as taken down from [www.agosto-foundation.org](http://www.agosto-foundation.org),  
end of June and beginning of July 2014



AGOSTO  
FOUNDATION

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION SUPPORTING SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PROJECTS.

NEWS ABOUT ARTIST RESIDENCY VS. INTERPRETATION CONTACT



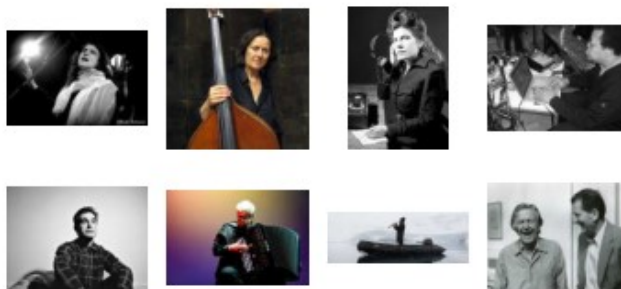
## VS. INTERPRETATION FESTIVAL AND SYMPOSIUM 2014

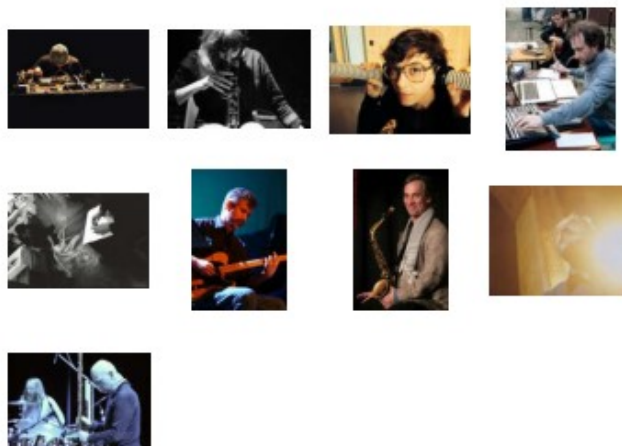
PRESENTED BY THE AGOSTO FOUNDATION

MAIN PARTNERS: EXPERIMENTAL SPACE NOD, ŠKOLSKÁ 28 GALLERY

The Agosto Foundation will present **vs. Interpretation**, a festival for improvisation in Prague, Czech Republic from July 16-20, 2014 at Experimental Space NoD and Školská 28 Communication Space. The following artists and presenters are being featured. See full schedule [here](#).

### FEATURED PERFORMANCES





## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

### GEORGE E. LEWIS



George E. Lewis is the Edwin H. Case Professor of American Music at Columbia University. The recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship in 2002, an Alpert Award in the Arts in 1999, a United States Artists 2011 USA Walker Fellowship, and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Lewis studied composition with Muhal Richard Abrams at the AACM School of Music, and trombone with Dean Hey. A member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) since 1971, Lewis's work as composer, improviser, performer and interpreter explores electronic and computer music, computer-based multimedia installations, text-sound works, and notated and improvisative forms, and is documented on more than 140 recordings.

Read George's full bio on the Columbia U website.

### PAULINE OLIVERO S

Pauline Oliveros is an American accordionist and composer who is a central figure in the development of post-war electronic art music.

She was a founding member of the San Francisco Tape Music Center in the 1960s, and served as its director. She has taught music at Mills College, the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Oliveros has written



books, formulated new music theories and investigated new ways to focus attention on music including her concepts of "Deep Listening" and "sonic awareness".

Oliveros will be presenting a sonic installation at the Whitney Museum of American Art's 2014 Biennial, activated by International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) performances.

More information on Pauline may be found at her website.

## PERFORMERS LIST

George E. Lewis

Pauline Oliveros

Iva Bittová

Annie Gosfield

David Rothenberg

Joëlle Léandre

Michał Rataj

Jaromír Typlt

Morgan O'Hara

Lucie Vítková

Hamka Gote Research and Development

Ivan Palacký

Dafne Vicente-Sandoval

Markus Popp

Dawn of Midi

Petr Kotík

Barbora Sojková

Prague Improvisation Orchestra

Cristina Maldonado

Marco Eneidi

Lukas Ligeti

Mary Oliver



Jeffrey Goldberg

Lisa Cay Miller

and more!





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NEWS ABOUT ARTIST RESIDENCY VS. INTERPRETATION CONTACT



One of the Agosto Foundation's most important contributions in 2014 to the local and international music scene is the **vs. Interpretation** festival which will be dedicated to promoting innovative cross-disciplinary improvised artistic projects and research in improvised practice. The festival will take place in Prague from July 16-20.

## THE MISSION

The mission of the 2014 international festival, **vs. Interpretation**, is to bring together a diverse group of artists for the sake of presenting, examining and documenting new creative, experimental music from a global and interdisciplinary perspective. Listeners will be given the unique opportunity to witness and experience real-time composition and improvisation, and interact with exceptional artists who are practicing in our lifetime.

## ENGAGEMENT

- Awareness of both local and international creative artists working in a variety of fields.
- Experience and interaction with artists in an intimate setting.
- Citizens will experience Czech artists next to international artists.
- Czech artists presented on the global and international stage.

## COMMUNITY

- Master classes and workshops for children, young adults and adults.

## DIVERSITY

- The audience will experience new exciting ways to hear music.
- New styles of music will be brought to wider audiences
- The first *vs. Interpretation* festival will take place July 16-20, 2014 in the center of Prague.

PROPOSED  
PROGRAM

Over the course of the four days, the festival and symposium will offer performances and presentations, opportunities for collaboration, lectures, panel discussions, workshops, sound installations, film screenings and evening concerts.





A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION SUPPORTING SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PROJECTS.

NEWS ABOUT ARTIST RESIDENCY VS. INTERPRETATION CONTACT



## VS. INTERPRETATION SYMPOSIUM 2014

Dear Symposium participants;

In order to ensure that we can communicate properly with you about details and requirements for the festival, we ask you to please send inquiries to [info@agosto-foundation\(dot\)org](mailto:info@agosto-foundation(dot)org) using vs. Interpretation Festival in the subject header.

Thank you and we look forward to seeing you at this great event!

The Agosto Foundation will present an inter-disciplinary festival and symposium on improvisation, which will be held July 16-20, 2014 in Prague, Czech Republic.

The symposium—scheduled for July 17-19—will include paper and panel sessions, workshops, sound and text installations, dance, film, and concerts. The keynote address is by distinguished composer and scholar, **George E. Lewis** (Edwin H. Case Professor of American Music, Columbia University). Workshops and performances by International artists will include: **Pauline Oliveros**, **George E. Lewis**, **Iva Bittová**, **Markus Popp**, **Joëlle Léandre**, and others.

The symposium addresses any aspect of improvisational practice, especially how improvisation informs and shapes perceptions of creativity. Possible topics include:

*The future of improvised practices; What happens when people improvise; How do non-artists improvise; Does technology improvise; The improvising body; How art*

*and ideas improvise; How improvised practices communicate between disciplines; Cultural location and cross-cultural and cross-genre trends in current "musicing"; Notions of Afro-centricity and Euro-centricity in improvisation; The impact of improvisation on various music genres; The politics of reception; Theorizing the social and political implications of improvised traditions; The role of gender and body; Alternative spaces and the relationship of improvisation to current changes in music, or other, pedagogies.*

Selected presentations are also about (but not limited to) notions of performance improvisation, as well as the theoretical, technological, and cultural contexts and frameworks for improvised practices. We are interested in creating a dynamic exchange between multiple disciplines and welcome proposals from a diverse group of scholars, practitioners, technologists, composers, visual artists, filmmakers, and cultural theorists.

Presentations will take form in a variety of mediums (i.e., not just traditional paper submissions). Individual paper presentations will be allotted 15 minutes. Length of workshops and panel discussions will be determined once all proposals have been reviewed.

Papers/proposals from participants at all stages of their academic/artistic and professional development will be featured at the symposium.

The conference language is English. The symposium committee will review all submissions.

**Note – Publication:** As well as abstracts being published in the conference proceedings, the vs. Interpretation 2014 Symposium Committee will select conference papers for an edited collection to publish in 2015.

The vs. Interpretation festival is presented by the Agosto Foundation with the support of Školská 28 Communication Space, Prague, Czech Republic.

#### **Conference Chairs:**

Cynthia Plachá (Agosto Foundation, CZ)

Miloš Vojtěchovský (FAMU CAS, CZ)

David Rothenberg (NJIT, CZ)

Allison Johnson (SOKA University, USA)

#### **Paper Review Committee:**

Eric Lewis (McGill University, Canada)

George E. Lewis (Columbia, USA)

Allison Johnson (OSU/Soka University, USA)

Tracy McMullen (Bowdoin College, USA)

Jason Robinson (Amherst College, USA)

Scott Smallwood (University of Alberta, Canada)

## A B S T R A C T S

Thursday 17.7.

Paper session 1A (11:00 — 12:30)

Chaired by Miloš Vojtěchovský

TeatroJason Robinson**Improvisation and Telematics: Toward an Understanding of Latency and Interactivity in Networked Performance.**

In recent years, an increasing number of performances take place that involve musicians distributed across two or more sites linked in real time using specialized audio and video networking technologies on the Internet. Such performances go by several names—telematics, networked music, distributed performance, net music—and strike a revealing balance between remarkable new aesthetic and technological possibilities and the “believable,” that is, the boundaries at which certain technical limitations push against deeply held assumptions about musical performance (and, by extension, improvisation). One such limitation is latency, a kind of time delay intrinsic to all networked communication. Research suggests that the presence of more than fifty milliseconds of latency between two or more performers limits their ability to play in synchronous time together, a threshold often crossed in telematic performance.

The use of improvisation in telematics, however, further complicates the impact of latency on performance and accentuates the complicated distinctions and similarities between co-located, traditional performance and networked performance. Drawing examples from Virtual Tour 2013 (a multi-site networked performance involving musicians in California, Massachusetts, and New York, in the United States, and Zurich, Switzerland), I illustrate the impact of latency on two distinct forms of improvisation used in networked performance: “open” improvisation (in a rubato tempo without a predetermined synchronous “beat” or time structure) and “groove-oriented” improvisation (with a synchronous “beat” or time structure). I bring together two different temporal frameworks from traditional co-located performance—microtiming (via Vijay Iyer) and participatory discrepancies (via Charles Keil and Steven Feld)—to examine the

impact of latency on telematic improvisation. My conclusion is rather surprising: both the aesthetic strategies and the “believable” in telematic improvisation recast perspectives derived from traditional co-located performance, thus reflecting larger, more deeply held assumptions about embodiment, communication, and interactivity in improvisation.

A saxophonist, composer, and scholar, **Jason Robinson** (PhD, UC San Diego) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Music at Amherst College (with affiliations in Black Studies and Film & Media Studies). His teaching and research focuses on jazz, improvised music, African diasporic music, and interactive music technologies. His current book project, “(Re)Sounding the African Diaspora,” investigates the role of improvisation in collaborations involving African American and continental African musicians.

Ian Mikyska**Lines and Sounds: Hermeneutics of Multimedia Improvisation**

In this presentation, I propose an immediate interpretive approach to multimedia improvisation, specifically involving sonic and visual media, based on Nicholas Cook’s work on theory of multimedia and Lawrence Kramer’s approach to interpretation. The presentation takes the form of a lecture-performance of approximately 45 minutes, with approximately half the time being occupied by improvised performances by Stratocluster, a Prague-based improvising sextet.

I take as a basic starting point Cook’s use of metaphorical mapping as a basic process in multimedia. He describes the relationships in which different media can exist, and I extend his thinking to the relationship between the subjectivities of the individual improvisers.

Jean Jacques Nattiez describes analysis of music as pertaining to either the poietic, neutral or esthetic level, and I propose a model of multimedia improvisation which treats every improviser as a poietic force, the end result therefore being a combination of more than two continua which can – but don't have to – enter into the relationships described by Cook. I also expand on how this model might prove useful for forms of interpretation and analysis that don't prioritise the composer above all else, as it engenders a way of thinking about interpretation of multi-poietic productions that could be extended to traditionally notated music.

**Ian Mikyska** is a composer, improviser and writer with Czech roots, currently living and working between London and Prague. His main interests, both artistic and academic, lie in the connection between music and meaning, other media, and relational aspects of artistic and non-artistic practice. As might be expected, he has worked in a variety of media, from pure music (commissions from the Ostrava Days festival, CoMA Summer Music and Strings of Autumn Festival among others), through theatrical performances (productions with Blood, Love & Rhetoric Theatre, Akanda Theatre and others, as both composer, author and director) to purely text or graphic based work (graphical and musical poems set to be published in *Psí víno* and *VLAKE*). In 2014, he co-founded the inter-arts collective *hra94* (game94), which takes as the basis of its program intermedia and collective improvisation, as well as serving a platform that endorses smaller and more specifically oriented projects or collectives such as *Stratocluster*. *Hra94* is currently working on editing its first feature-length film, shot at an all-night participative performance evening that took place in Prague in June 2014. He studies with James Weeks at the Guildhall School of Music, and is currently spending a year in Prague working on theatrical projects and several commissions. He is generously supported by the Guildhall Trust and the Strings of Autumn Music Festival.

### Christopher Williams

**Long-Term Improvisation, Groundwave Rondo, and The Barcelona Chronicles**

Musical improvisation, according to conventional wisdom, is about the moment: the spontaneous, realtime, and unforeseen in the course of performance. However as research by Benson (2003), Lash (2011), and Peters (forthcoming) has shown, improvisation can also occur throughout processes of “preparation” in instrumental practice, group rehearsal, and even organization and presentation. In my experience as a composer-performer, the connection between these “out-of-time” constraints and “in-time” creation can be more radical still. Offstage and onstage improvisation may not only be analogous but continuous – woven together in a long-term improvisation that comprises many performances, pieces, and/ or life itself. The presentation will explore this notion by way of two examples:

My solo *Groundwave Rondo* is a series of pieces for contrabass and “tape,” each version of which is made (as often as possible) on the way to the gig. While in the train, I improvise for 15 minutes

with an AM radio and record it. The radio signal is obliterated by interferences from the train motor, overhead cable, and onboard electronics, turning my receiver into a sort of synthesizer which can be modulated by turning the frequency dial. The recording is played back unedited in the concert — without my having heard it — and we perform a duet together.

Derek Bailey's *The Barcelona Chronicles*, a series of recordings made in 2005, documents the legendary guitarist's “new approach to his instrument, whilst dealing with the complex and progressive limitations caused by Motor Neurone disease.” As muscular degeneration reduced his left-hand mobility and made holding a plectrum impossible, Bailey developed a new, sparser way of playing using his thumb. “Here was someone for whom obstacles were occasions for necessary creativity.”

**Christopher Williams** is a wayfarer on the body-mind continuum. His medium is music. As a contrabassist, Williams has collaborated with Derek Bailey, Justin Bennett, Compagnie Ouïe/Dire, Charles Curtis, LaMonte Young's Theatre of Eternal Music, Robin Hayward (Reidemeister Move), Hans W. Koch, and dancer Martin Sonderkamp; and with composers such as Chris Adler, Benjamin Carson, Charlie Morrow, Ana-Maria Rodriguez, Marc Sabat, and Erik Ulman. As a curator, he organized over 70 concerts of contemporary and experimental music in Barcelona between 2003-2009 with *Associació Musical l'Embut*. He currently co-curates *Certain Sundays*, a monthly salon in Berlin, and participates in the Berlin Improvisation Research Group.

### Reinhard Gagel

**OHO! - Offhandopera - a model for creating musical forms in the course of performance.**

OHO! Offhandopera is the name of a format for singers and instrumentalists to invent and perform an opera offhand without preparation and rehearsals. It took place during the last two years in university of music and performing arts, vienna and especially in exploratorium berlin, center for improvised music and creative music pedagogics in berlin. The most interesting thing is that it is a way to create improvised music in the sense of an artistic production, not only as a jam session. The participants, professional artists and laymen are not chosen or casted, they decide to come to the performance and join the production. It works under special conditions, these are:

- » there is a libretto or text given, selected and arranged by myself in order to organize the musical course. The texts are short plays, poems, extracts from theatre pieces and short stories. Especially dadaistic, surrealistic and soundart poetry is used;
- » no musical notes and styles are prescribed, all will be invented during the session;
- » I function as conductor or rather as animator, to create the atmosphere and concentration of the performance;

- » I do this by hand signals, by body gesture, by words, spoken during the performance, and operate the formal things: i.e. who and how long s.o. will sing or play or in which mood and dynamics. I do this to support the singers and instrumentalists not to work out my own expectations;
- » the main thing is the creation of music by the participants of the opera and the emerging of ideas during the about 1.5 hours lasting performance.

In my opinion OHO! Offhandopera is a model for collective creation and an artistical production of an actual music theatre between the styles and a functioning collaboration between professional and non-professional musicians. In each performance there are 10 to 15 participants, but the final performance of an OHO! opera in Vienna is joined by more than 30 students.

I will speak about the organization, the arrangement and the technique to support people in creating their own improvised music and will show some recordings and videos. I take the OHO! as a model of cultural participation across the borders between musicians

and so called nonprofessional-musicians, and laymen. The latter are authentic and obsessed by music and often their way of singing/playing is unusual and fresh. In exploratorium berlin, an artistic lab for improvisation, we offer a lot of open stages and other forms of improvised music production to foster creative music production.

**Reinhard Gagel**, Ph.D., can look back on long engagement with free improvisation, an engagement which reached a high point in his dissertation «The Complex Creative Moment: Improvisation as a social art». Gagel is a professional improvisation musician active in artistic improvisation, leading several own ensembles, working with well-known international improvisation musicians (among others Malcolm Goldstein (Canada), Burkhard Stangl (Austria), Mirio Cosottini (Italy)) and publishing broadcast and cd-recordings with his own production company (Ensemble Foliafolie Cologne). He is also an artistic educationalist with broad experience in leadership of improvisation ensembles and as a lecturer for musical communication at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. He is working in art-based research at the exploratorium berlin, an institute for performing, educating and researching improvised music and art.

## Thursday 17.7.

### Paper session 1B (11:00 — 12:30)

Chaired by David Rothenberg

### Video NoD

#### **Michael Gardiner**

**Spectral Fizz and the Image of extended Perceptions:  
Theory qua Improvisation.**

The haze of a thousand dying cicadas; coiling summer winds; half-tints of a Miles solo from Kind of Blue looped and played backwards atop the stoic opening of Bartok's first string quartet; pulse-trains of scattered crickets, each attempting to pinpoint a quadrant of the landscape, but all locations become masked by the cloud of virtually endless information in the atmospheric swarm of accumulating noise; a 60 hertz electrical buzz; the effervescent spectral fizz of ginger ale and the perceiving/unperceiving mind discerning the event—sound itself is transversal, omnidirectional, overlapped. It bleeds and blends locations and distances.

When information loses its body, the "autonomous subject is up for grabs" (Hayles, 1999). When musical analysis loses its body

(the autonomous musical object), it assumes a multisensible, improvisational gesture. At this point, a suborganizational, interconnected, participative pattern or "tic-system" wins out over any specific material expression. [In Fanged Noumena (2011), Nick Land describes tic-systems, or assemblies of functionally interconnected microstimulus as, "systems entirely intractable to subject/object segregation, or to rigid disciplinary typologies."] The sound of the dying cicada loses its epistemological shell.

Theory qua improvisation counteracts the temptation toward reduction—suppressing the spectrum of ideas too quickly when approaching a topic—and replaces it with a desire for heterogeneous considerations. In this paper I use the phrase, "the field of music theory" quite literally to mean an ambient surface or screen (of the kind that might organize a Rauschenberg "combine", for example); the simultaneous preparation and perception of an abstract assemblage and its role in the sketching of a theoretical territory. A screen



become the image of thought, and a field its horizon.

Such a position holds onto a detailed hearing of sonic environments without succumbing to reductionist tendencies, thereby directing our counter-materialist qualia toward a space of design, a space that explores the exploded, orthographic view of the gap (the interference pattern, the noise) that exists between a sound wave and the mind's perception of a sound. For there is a crucial distinction to be made between "raw" acoustic data (which already includes a psychophysical layer of remove, insofar as an individual brain always filters data) and "what we are aware of" in the perception of that data. Or, more simply, what we are aware of in perception, which A.N. Whitehead defined as nature. Isabelle Stengers, in her discussion of Whitehead's Concept of Nature, elaborates; "A contrast insinuates itself [blocking the pedagogical series of explanations], between the words immediately available for saying 'what' we perceive, and the question, open for its part, of what we are aware of 'in perception'" In my theoretical model, perception becomes largely a matter of open attention and discernment within an indefinite, transfinite constellation; an "arbitrary distribution in the midst of what we are aware of".

**Michael Gardiner** is Assistant Professor of Music Theory at the University of Mississippi. His research interests include timbral morphology, the intersections of theological and musical space, Japanese noh drama, and challenges to the musical work. His articles have been published in *Current Musicology*, *Asian Music*, and *Sonus*. He is currently writing an analytic monograph on the *Ordo Virtutum* of Hildegard von Bingen.

### Cat Hope

**Scoring for Music Improvisation - The potential of digital graphic notations for improvising ensembles.**

This paper examines the range of improvisation possibilities in animated, graphic and text scores that are made, presented and interpreted on a computer. Computing offers new ways to communicate different types of musical ideas, facilitating a new variety of starting points and guides for improvisation. Moving away from paper pages to a computer screen or projected image enables scores that can easily feature wide range of colour, movement, aleatoric components, the co-ordination of multiple parts and control of electronics. The idea of 'improvising from a score' has been developed - and challenged - considerably by the potential of computers, and is examined through different approaches.

It is well known that improvisatory techniques for musicians can span from completely free and spontaneous performances to guided structures. This paper focuses on the different ways notation as a way to guide improvisation, including the way it can be made or adapted on a computer, examining trends in animated and graphic notation, as well as the impact and ongoing development of text for the communication of musical ideas. Further, a range of techniques

for the presentation and interpretation of scores for works with a large component of improvisation will be discussed. This includes the potential for networking multiple computers and techniques that enable improvising electronic artists to share score interpretation with acoustic instruments.

The paper examines works and processes that range from the authors town to a wide variety of other composers across different musical styles that include jazz, concrete poetry, pop and noise. Exemplar works that have been developed in conjunction with ensembles such as The London Improvisers Orchestra (UK), Slátur (Iceland) the Chicago Modern Orchestra (USA) and the authors own Decibel New Music group (Australia) demonstrate a range of techniques as applied to different ensemble scale and improvisatory expertise.

**Cat Hope** is a composer, sound artist and musician based in Western Australia. Cat's composition and performance practices engage elements of low frequency sound, drone, noise, graphic notation and improvisation. She has been a songwriter with some 6 albums to her credit, playing in pop bands in Germany, Italy and Australia in the 1990s. In 2013 she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to study digital graphic music notations internationally as well undertake residencies at the Visby International Composers Centre, Sweden, Civitella, Italy and the Peggy Glanville Hicks House in Sydney in 2014. She is the director of the award winning new music ensemble Decibel who have toured internationally and released her compositions, and is an academic at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts.

### Marcel Cobussen

**Technology as an Actant in the Field of Musical Improvisation**

- I. Central in my thinking on improvisation are two concepts: complexity and singularity.
- II. Improvisation is, in my opinion, a complex event in which many actants (the term is coined by Bruno Latour), many actors, factors, and vectors, both human and non-human, converge and interact. It is this interaction which will take center stage in this presentation. Examining improvisation as a complex system shifts the focus from an overriding concern with isolated actants to changing relationships between these actants. Besides human-human interactions improvisation also implies interactions with or between audience, instruments, the performance space, technology, acoustics, aesthetic and cultural backgrounds, etc. Taking into account all these levels of musical, social, historical, acoustical, and technological engagement gives a more complete picture of the practice of improvisation.
- III. Although it is my point of departure that improvisation takes place in all musicking, not all of the actants mentioned above determine every improvisation to the same extent; in certain situations (periods, styles, cultures as well as more singular circumstances), some are more prominent and active than others. Therefore, I don't want to deal with improvisation "in general". Instead I emphasize singularity: each improvisation will yield a different network of actants and inte-

reactions. In other words, I would like to present a radical empiricism, a focus on particular and individual cases.

**IV.** One of these specific cases is a piece by the young Belgium composer Paul Craenen, called *tubes*. It is by analyzing this piece that I will reflect on the question whether technology is improvising. Somehow it seems obvious and often taken for granted that only humans (or, perhaps, living beings) are able to improvise. However, by analyzing *tubes* I will defend the claim that it is specifically the technology used here that creates a situation of experimentation and creativity. Performers and audience are invited, even forced, to share a space of surprises, discoveries, and unexpected sonic results; in short, they encounter the un-fore-seen (im-pro-vised).

**Marcel Cobussen** studied jazz piano at the Conservatory of Rotterdam and Art and Cultural Studies at Erasmus University, Rotterdam (the Netherlands). He currently teaches Music Philosophy and Auditory Culture at Leiden University (the Netherlands) and the Orpheus Institute in Ghent (Belgium). Cobussen is author of the book *Thresholds. Rethinking Spirituality Through Music* (Ashgate, 2008), editor of *Resonanties. Verkenningen tussen kunsten en wetenschappen* (LUP, 2011) and co-author of *Music and Ethics* (Ashgate, 2012) and *Dionysos danst weer. Essays over hedendaagse muziekbeleving* (Kok Agora, 1996). He is editor-in-chief of the open access online Journal of Sonic Studies ([www.sonicstudies.org](http://www.sonicstudies.org)). His Ph.D. dissertation *Deconstruction in Music* (2002) was presented as an online website located at [www.deconstruction-in-music.com](http://www.deconstruction-in-music.com).

### **Felipe Castellani and Rogerio Costa**

**Orquestra Errante: preparing an environment propitious to the practice of free cross cultural improvisation**

This proposal contains a reflection on the process of creating the performance *Espelho* (Mirror) which incorporates ideas of composition, improvisation and live electronic interaction. In this performance, act and interact two musicians (one playing the saxophone and another operating the electronics devices). From a "roadmap" previously prepared at a stage of collective composition, are pre-established the electronic processing environments to be used successively during the performance and the types of sound materials most suitable for each of these environments, as well as the transitions between them.

Our intention is to discuss what are the issues involved in the use of hybrid systems and to what extent this type of environment favors or hinders the sound immersion, the syntactic consistency of sound flow and the performance of the musicians (especially from the point of view of physicality).

Improvisation is the basic behavior for the saxophonist who, from the pre-established sound materials creates, in real-time, his intervention. The general aspect of the flow of the performance results from the sum of the sounds created by the saxophonist and the changes that are processed in real time by the other musician in an intense interactive process of mutual influences.

Apparently, the performance depends entirely on the sound of the saxophone, as the musician who operates the electronic devices performs processing the sounds that are produced by the acoustic instrument. However, the preparation of the environment also includes sound samples pre-recorded and prepared prior to the performance, which gives the other musician, to some extent, the possibility of acting «physically», manipulating and emitting sounds, as if they came from his «digital instrument.»

The use of a single sound source, the saxophone, aims to ensure a morphological 'familiarity' to the various environmental settings. But beyond the pre-recorded sound materials, analyzed, categorized and processed, there are other elements present in the complex environment of collective creation that guarantee the consistency of the proposal. As most of environments prepared for live electronic interaction, the one used here brings implicit compositional ideas, for example, the idea of 'immediate extension' (delay and granulation) and distortion (pitch-shifters) of sonic material produced by the acoustic instrument. Finally, emerges the idea of an artistic collective creation, shaped as a pathway, full of irreversibilities. Although this pathway can not be set globally, it sets up occasionally erratically, in the manner of a processual mobile, where traditional musical parameters give rise to others such as energy, gesture and direction.

Felipe Merker Castellani is a Ph.D. student in the Music Graduate Program of University of Campinas in the research area 'Music, language, Sonology', under the supervision of Pr. Dr. Silvio Ferraz and with financial support of the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP). He also has a degree in Musical Composition from Santa Marcelina College (2009) and a Master degree in Musical Creative Processes from University of Campinas (2010). Between 2013-2014, he conducted a research internship at the Centre for Research in Computer Science and Music Creation of the University Paris 8 in the commune of Saint-Denis, north of Paris, under the supervision of Pr. Dr. Anne Sèdes.

As a composer **Rogerio Costa** has written compositions for various formations including octets, quartets, trios, duos, solo pieces for saxophone and piano. His compositions have been played by leading artists in Brazil and Europe such as Abstrai of Rio de Janeiro, Camerata Alberta of São Paulo and Pierrot Luneire Ensemble of Vienna. As a researcher Prof. Costa currently develops a research project on improvisation and its connections with other areas of study. He has extensive bibliographic production on improvisation published in journals, conference proceedings and books. Two of the most important current projects under his supervision, related to his research are the groups of free improvisation *Musicafacta* and *Orquestra Errante* where he also acts as a saxophonist. He is currently doing his pos-doc research in Paris, France at the Université Paris 8, under supervision of Professor Makis Solomos.

## Friday 18.7.

Paper session 2A (14:00 — 15:30)

Chaired by Miloš Vojtěchovský

### Teatro

#### Lucie Vítková

**Composing Situations: Improvisation in the Music of Christian Wolff**

Non-idiomatic improvisation has become strong musical expression to simulate the sounds of the environment. Every improviser develops own musical language based on his or her instrument (acoustic or electronic), which they use certain way to interact musically to each other or to the audience. This musical interaction has often been compared to the social communication in everyday life through our spoken language.

Music, I propose, is always a social action. Society, for example, creates a collective sound, which can be perceived or ignored as a chaotic structure. When we start to train our perception to pay attention to the surrounding sounds, we can actually distinguish the actions according to our ears and start to understand them. There is lots of improvisation and composition on the streets. The person asking about the right direction is improvising with a stranger; the tram is making music in the groove of its track. We can gradually discover the meanings of the music and sound around while re-examining these situations.

In the musical world, composition or improvisation, we have established various social situations (solo, duo, ensemble, orchestra), which we tend to not perceive as distinct from music.

My research is on the music of Christian Wolff, a composer exemplary in realising social aspects as important compositional parameters, constructing musical works in which the decisions of and interactions between the players are balanced delicately with preconceived frameworks. His compositions are at once restrictive and liberating: the rules of composition never absent, the idioms of improvisation always close at hand. In this paper, I wish to introduce preliminary findings of my doctoral research, which explores Wolff's handling of diverse strategies for musical and social interaction. Understanding Wolff's 'composed situations' I suggest may help us

understand the nature of the relationship between 'fixed' and 'free' as we encounter them in today's music.

**Lucie Vítková** is a composer, performer and improviser of accordion, harmonica, voice and dance from the Czech Republic. She graduated in accordion performance at Brno Conservatory in 2010 and composition at Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno (CZ) in 2013. During her Master Degree, she studied at Royal Conservatory in The Hague (NL) and at California Institute of the Arts in Valencia (USA). She has studied with Martin Smolka, Jaroslav Št'astný, Martijn Padding, Gillius van Bergijk and Michael Pisaro. Along with her study of music she used to teach tap dance at the Faculty of Theatre of JAMU. She is member of the Ensemble Marijan, Dunami, Brno Improvising Unit, Dust in the Groove and Prague Improvisation Orchestra. Vítková's work pursues two lines of enquiry: in the compositions she focuses on sonification (compositions based on abstract models derived from physical objects), while her improvisation practice explores characteristics of discrete spaces through the interaction between sound and movement.

#### Emmanuel Nnamani

**Improvisation, Catharsis and Creativity On the Beat and In Tune: Perspectives on Structures, Images, and the Message in Fela's Afrobeat Music**

What does improvisation mean in a typical Afrobeat music composition and performance? What effect does it have on the performers and members of the audience alike? What is its place in the creative-cathartic fabric and musical structuring in the Afrobeat brand? What aesthetic creative interpretation informs the improvisation structures in Fela's Afrobeat? Many works have been done on the Afrobeat genre, created by Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, the famous Nigerian musician and activist. Regarded as a rebel by his detractors

but recognized as an icon by his fans, Fela lived and died as a great multi-instrumentalist and musical giant in his Afrobeat music. His fame stands out strongly in his dexterity and craftsmanship showcased profoundly in his improvisatory skills. The artistic-aesthetic discussion of these essential aspects of Fela's art has not been given the needed scholarly attention. This paper attempts to fill this gap.

The paper presents some detailed examination of Fela's works (using multi-sited data) with a view to showing the germinal nature of the improvisation structures in the artiste's composition style. In his Afrobeat music, Fela evokes some of the most thrilling moments of his art and creative brilliance in his improvisations. Such performative scenarios showcase his mastery, transcendence of the bounds of sonic-aesthetic and cathartic spaces and colorful ways of getting from chorus to chorus, transforming the cadences and passages and evading and/or uniting the harmonic structure of the theme to create a musical space that bonds his aesthetic philosophy with the echo of aesthetic thirst of his audience and enthusiast alike. It is in such an artistic grove that Afrobeat's message and Fela's art resonate with the Afro-centric aesthetics of creative freedom which is fundamental in African traditional, contemporary art and popular music practice – symbiotically projected and professed in the improvisations in Fela's works.

### Andrew Wilson

**Musical Prose, Dada, and Jazz: A Case Study of Erwin Schulhoff's Improvisationspraxis**

Since Ernest T. Ferand's pioneering study *Die Improvisation in der Musik* (1938), our understanding of the role and importance of improvisation in music has increased exponentially. Yet despite numerous and thorough studies on improvisation in late nineteenth-century and post-World War II art music, little research has been done on improvisation in classical music of the first decades of the early twentieth century. Our knowledge of improvisation in this area remains surprisingly scant and essentially reflects Ferand's views, which suggest that Improvisationspraxis in early twentieth-century art music ceased to exist.

In my paper I will shed light on the role and importance of improvisation in the work of composer and pianist Erwin Schulhoff (1894–1942). I will argue that his attraction to improvisation and improvisational practices was shaped by his musical training and artistic interests as well as by his contact with contemporary avant-garde artists. I will first trace concepts of improvisation and improvisational characteristics found in Schulhoff's artistic environment and show how they affected his early creative activities. I will then analyse three of his works, *Fünf Pittoresken* (1919), *Bassnachtigall* (1922), and the piano duo *Mitternachtsgespenster* (1933) and discuss different concepts of improvisation found in these pieces. Finally, I will also briefly address the reception of this music as well as other

works with improvisatory qualities in this period.

My paper is based on unpublished materials housed in such archives as the Archiv des Museums der tschechischen Musik (Prague) and the Paul-Sacher Stiftung (Basel) and scholarship by Bek, Berghaus, Feisst, Ferand, Gilliam, John, Nettle, Lewis, and Solis. This research paper will contribute to a better understanding of some of the concepts and modes of improvisation found in the early twentieth century and in Schulhoff's work.

After initial studies in computer sciences at the University of Neuchâtel and training as a classical and jazz pianist, **Andrew Wilson** worked as an English teacher and translator (2001–2014). He was also active until 2009 as a pianist: concerts, solo performances and as a member of various jazz and pop-rock groups. In 2004, he had returned to university studies and in 2010 obtained a Bachelor of Arts in English and Musicology at the universities of Neuchâtel and Geneva. In October 2012, he received a Master of Arts in Musicology at the University of Basel, with honours (insigni cum laude). Since then, Andrew Wilson has been researching his PhD topic 'Concepts of improvisation and their impact on early twentieth century art music'. In April 2014, this project was officially accepted as a research program at the Musikwissenschaft Seminar der Universität Basel and is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF).

### Kevin McNeilly

**Possibility Abstracts: Taylor Ho Bynum, Nathaniel Mackey and Discrepancy**

Released in November 2013, the multi-format set of recordings of Taylor Ho Bynum's innovative composition for improvising sextet, *Navigation*, both culminates and continues his fascination with the interfaces between the extemporaneous and the written, the scripted and the performative. Separate LP and compact disc versions of the work are paired with different fragments of text from African-American poet Nathaniel Mackey's experimental epistolary novel *Bass Cathedral*, a book that Ho Bynum has recently said, for him, is probably the best writing about music he has encountered. Earlier compositions by Bynum, such as his suite *Madeleine Dreams*, have not only used prose fiction as libretto, but more tellingly have striven to address sonically and structurally the complex and often fraught relationships between the musical and the diegetic, between sound and sense.

*Navigation* takes up Mackey's own address to this interface, sounding what Mackey understands as creative discrepancy, an expressive troubling of formal and cultural boundaries. Name-checking both Sun Ra and Louis Armstrong, Mackey has noted what he calls a "play of parallel estrangements" in improvised music and in poetry, arguing that music "is prod and precedent for a recognition that the linguistic realm is also the realm of the orphan," that is, of the limits of sense, a liminal zone of both orchestration and letting go. Ho

Bynum's recordings pick up not only on Mackey's thorough enmeshment in jazz history, but also on his intention to pursue the expressive potential of language and of music at their textural boundaries, at moments of troubling contact between divergent worldviews, or between dissimilar social and cultural genetics. Composing using what Mackey calls m'apping – a portmanteau splice of mapping and mishap, pursuing what Mackey calls the "demiurgic rumble" of discrepancy, improvising across the gaps between careful craft and unruly noise – Ho Bynum conjures a hybrid and collaborative music that blends the complex Afrological heritages of jazz performance style (audible in Navigation's network of gestures to Charles Mingus and Duke Ellington, to name only two key forebears) with graphic scoring techniques derived from Sylvano Bussotti or Wadada Leo Smith, among others.

If improvised music, for Mackey, represents – and represents precisely – what defies descriptive capture in language, what eludes ekphrasis, then the music of Taylor Ho Bynum's sextet aspires to invert that representational effort, to take up the discrepant aesthetic

tactics of Mackey's writing and to assess how the written (as graph, as graphic score) can approach and test the expressive limits of making music happen. Taylor Ho Bynum's compositions for improvisers offer exemplary instances of how to negotiate creatively the boundaries between text and sounding, and suggest a means of addressing, too, the graphic work of other composer-improvisers, including the work of Nicole Mitchell, Anthony Braxton and Barry Guy.

**Kevin McNeilly** is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. He is the UBC site coordinator for Improvisation, Community and Social Practice (ICASP – [www.improvcommunity.com](http://www.improvcommunity.com)) and for the International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation (IICSI). He has published criticism and scholarship on the improvised music of Steve Lacy, Charles Mingus, John Zorn, Miles Davis and others, as well as on contemporary poetry and poetics and on media. His poetry has appeared in a number of journals, and his book of poems – a genealogy of early jazz trumpet players – is *Embouchure* (Nightwood Editions, 2011).

## Friday 18.7.

Paper session 2B (14:00 – 15:30)

Chaired by Sara Pinheiro

### Video NoD

#### Vanessa Tomlinson

*Listen to the sound of your imagination – An exploration of imaginative listening*

This presentation examines the notion and experience of 'imaginative listening' on the basis of one work by Vanessa Tomlinson – *Nostalgia* (2013) – and the notion of sensorial imagination of Kathleen Coessens (2012). Included in the presentation will be an embedded series of participatory listening activities and realtime improvisational outcomes by the authors. *Nostalgia* was composed to explore sound as it happens in the imagination. The work intentionally moves the scene of sound construction from the composer's imagination, to the performer and/or the audience. This work demands a different level of engagement and trust – requiring that the performer and/or audience to enter into an inner relationship with memory, experience and imagination that privileges the personal journey of each individual as a platform for sonic imagination.

The presentation will incorporate concepts of auditory imagination, explored through the examination of perceptual or sensorial imagination (Koessens 2012) and conceptual or propositional imagination (Williams 1973). We will explore these different sensorial modalities through analysing *Nostalgia* as a rubric of different types of imaginative listening; Material listening, Conceptual listening, Experiential listening and Internal Listening. Each listening attitude, helps provide a lexicon of listening approaches, hypothetically transferable to other musical settings. The compositional prompts provide multi-sensorial gateways into our imagination and into our memory, placing the act of sound production in the imagination of each individual performer and audience member. The sonic residue discovered, and the transitional or liminal space between located sounds forms a private listening experience for each active audience participant mapped onto the geo-cultural specificity of the individual.

Australian percussionist **Vanessa Tomlinson** is active in the fields of solo percussion, contemporary chamber music, improvisation, installation and composition. She has performed at festivals around the world such as Wien Modern, London Jazz Festival, Green Umbrella Series LA, Bang-on-a-Can Marathon NY, The Adelaide Festival of Arts, and Shanghai Festival. She is the recipient of 2 Green Room Awards, the 2011 APRA/AMC Award for Excellence by an organization or individual, and has been awarded artist residencies through Asialink (University of Melbourne), Civitella Ranieri (NY/Italy), Banff (Canada) and Bundanon (NSW). She has recorded on numerous labels including Mode Records, Tzadik, ABC Classics, Etcetera, Clocked Out and Innova. Vanessa is co-founder and artistic director of Clocked Out, one of Australia's most important and eclectic musical organisations, artistic director of percussion quartet Early Warning System and the percussionist for The Australian Art Orchestra. She is currently Associate Professor in Music at Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University.

### **Marc Hannaford**

#### **Improvisation as Bricolage**

How does one plan to improvise? Traditional conceptions of planning as a set of fixed and all encompassing set of procedures fail to provide each level of the emergency management hierarchy the flexibility to quickly respond to novel and unprecedented situations using its specialised tools. Employing improvisation in disaster response emphasises a particular approach to the deployment of previously learnt knowledge and a particular attitude to the nature of the situation. If improvisation is to be employed certain approaches to organisational management should also be adopted.

In this paper I will draw upon theorisations of improvisation in terms of "bricolage" and "wisdom," as well as organisational principles of "decentralised power" and "emergence," in order to theorise improvisation firstly in relation to the 2009 Victoria bushfires in Australia, and finally to some Australian improvised music. My discussion will critique the Australian royal commission's response to the 2009 Victoria Bushfires. I plan to show how many of the commission's findings allude to improvisation without explicitly addressing it; leading me to conclude that the royal commission would benefit from foregrounding the concept of improvisation in order to be better prepared for future extreme emergencies. I will then turn to examples of Australian improvised music and use the same concepts to theorise aspects of ensemble improvisation that I posit provides a more nuanced account of planning for musical improvisation than Aaron Berkowitz in his paper "Improvised Performance: Performers Perspectives" (2010) and aligned with John Whiteoak's theorisation of Australian improvised music and jazz (1999). My aim for this discussion is to show that, in both the case of emergency management and music, planning for improvisation can be theorised to good effect in terms of bricolage, wisdom, decentralised power and emergence.

Marc Hannaford is a PhD student in music theory at Columbia University, New York. He is also part of the Institute for Compara-

tive Literature. His primary interests are music, improvisation, sociological difference, group identity and agency, and power. He has presented and taught in Australia, New Zealand, Berlin, Sweden, Canada and Brazil. Marc received his undergraduate degree in music performance at the Australian National University, and a Masters of Music Performance (by Research) at the Victoria College of the Arts. He is also an accomplished pianist. He won the 2013 Music Council of Australia's Freedman Fellowship, the 2013 Jazz "Bell" award for most original 2012 album (Sarcophile), and the 2013 Australian Performing Rights Association's Art Award for best work (Anda Two).

### **Ximena Alarcón**

#### **Telematic embodiments: listening to the 'in-between' within migratory contexts**

When we migrate between geographies our body moves, experiencing a new climate, different food and territories; our mind wonders trying to understand the trace left, our body feels it. In the migratory process sometimes we feel we are not present in our new land or, on the contrary, we fully deny our homeland. We eventually start to imagine an 'in-between' space (Ortega, 2008), where we could place ourselves, our physical and mental territories.

Networked Migrations is a practice-based research project that explores the 'in-between' sonic space that exists within the context of migration, through Deep Listening practice (Oliveros, 2005) and improvisatory performances on the Internet, in order to expand the perceived sonic spaces that inform the migratory experience. This paper analyses the experiences of embodiments by participants in the telematic sonic performances 'Letters and Bridges' (Leicester and Mexico City), and 'Migratory Dreams', (London and Bogotá), from the perspectives of somatics and dream-work (Stewart, 2012; Lewis, 2005; Bosnak, 2007). The embodiments take place in the process of 'unselfing' (Schroeder, 2013), characteristic of networked performances, as participants collaborate and improvise telematically using only sound. Focusing on voice, which in a telematic performance is a disembodied being, and the sound environment, which permeates our sense of being in a specific location, the paper highlights this mediated improvisatory performance as an experience that helps migrants to reunite with their multiple selves, and that offers an extension of their perception of their body in new physical and virtual territories.

**Ximena Alarcón** is an artist who engages in listening to migratory spaces and connecting this to individual and collective memories. She creates sound art works, using networked technologies, derived from listening experiences in interstitial spaces where borders become diffused, such as underground transport systems, dreams, and the 'in-between' space in the context of migration. In 2010 she engaged in Deep Listening practice listening to her own migratory experience and creating scores for The Migratory Band. Currently she is a performing member of the recently



formed multi-arts improv ensemble 4 4 Flow. Ximena has a PhD in Music, Technology and Innovation, from De Montfort University, and was awarded with The Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship 2007-2009 to initiate her postdoctoral research in the Institute of Creative Technologies (IOCT). In May 2012 she obtained a Deep Listening certificate. Since 2011 she has worked as a Research Fellow at Creative Research into Sound Arts Practice (CRISAP).

### Ivan Palacký

**Sentences to tell over – interferences between improvisation in music and architecture.**

A short reflection on the strategies of improvisation in the interdisciplinary approach. The presentation reflects the essay « Sentences to tell over », published in the journal *His Voice* and from the

experience and micro-narration related to the architectural project for the Chapel of Franciscus of Assisi in Brno.

A musician and architect, **Ivan Palacký** performed in various bands and participated in a diverse range of musical projects. He performed at many concerts with the band «Sledě, živé sledě». He is currently a member of the ambi(val)ent duo «Tilko» (with Jennifer Helia DeFelice) and the audiovisual improvisational duo «Koberce, záclony» (with Filip Cenek). He also keeps audio diaries of his travels, recording story fragments, strange sounds and a diverse array of «acoustic errors». Since 2002, he has been involved in free improvisation, and enjoys participating in short-term projects (collaborations with Cremaster, Ruth Barberán and Margarida Garcia, Willem Guthrie, and Andrea Neumann, among others). He equally enjoys playing solo. His main passion since 2005 has been the «mining» of sounds from an amplified Dopleta 160 single bed knitting machine. As an architect, he is interested in architecture without «structures», sociological methods in project planning and morphogenetic maps in digital architecture.

## Friday 18.7.

Paper session 3A (16:00 – 17:30)

Chaired by Allison Johnson

### A Teatro

### Simon Rose

**The Agency of Improvisation**

The presentation describes how improvisation is a widespread activity, in all spheres of human activity, and at the same time relatively absent from education; signalling a deficit between our being-in-the-world and practice in education. The background and findings of the research project: 'Improvisation, music and learning: An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis' (Rose PhD thesis, 2013) are presented.

The particular experience of working successfully with students who have been permanently excluded from mainstream education (8 years) led to research with the aim to better understanding processes of improvisation. Together with experience of working with young people with special educational needs; experience as a professional musician; and an early career in drama, this paper describes improvisation's broad potential for education.

A body of knowledge has developed within the international

community of musicians whose practice is centred on improvisation. Ten highly experienced improvisers from Europe and North America took part in semi-structured interviews, the overarching question was: What is the place of improvisation in your practice? The study employed Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) is an idiographic approach through which lived-experience is examined in analysis. Through analysis the following super-ordinate themes of improvisation were identified: Learning, Process, Body and Strategies. These themes, and their 'unity,' will be explained through reference to interview extracts from the ten interviews. The socially inclusive and autonomous character of free improvisation was highlighted for its broad potential in education. Interpreting the phenomenon of free improvisation acknowledges the multiplicity of experience of improvisation in music. The co-presence, or 'unity' of the super-ordinate themes, Learning, Process, Body and Strategies is also significant in developing understanding of the nature of improvisation.

**Simon Rose** plays baritone and alto saxophones. Born in London, England, he has performed in Europe, Canada and USA. As well as collaborating with those who play traditional instruments, Rose performs with musicians who employ self-designed instruments and electronics. He is also interested in collaborations beyond music, for example with dance and fine art contexts. Performing solo is an ongoing project: 'Procession,' solo alto and 'Schmetterling,' solo baritone. Music recordings can be found on the labels: Emanem, Leo, PSI, Bruce's Fingers, Not Two, Rayon and PFMentum. His research interest is in the creative process of improvisation, in which he has completed three studies. Following an MA at Middlesex University, 2008, he gained his doctorate in 2013 at Glasgow Caledonian University. He is currently completing a book for Intellectbooks, UK concerning the agency of improvisation. Other publications include book chapters: 'Free improvisation in education,' in *Investigating Musical Performance* (Ashgate, 2012); 'Improvisation as real-time composition' in *The act of musical composition* (Ashgate, 2014), and 'The Process of Improvisation' in *Organising and Music* (Cambridge, 2014).

### Lisa Cay Miller

#### Talking Improv—Removing the Civil Censor

Accessing instantaneous creativity is elemental to experienced improvisers, as natural as breathing, walking and talking. Improvisers master their instruments, obtain vocabulary and technique and develop sophisticated deep-level communication skills and strategies for taking part in complex musical dialogue and interaction. As experienced players, it is possible to underestimate the capacity for being fully present, for committing mindfully to expression, and for establishing and accepting trust of others and of ourselves, methodologies that might not easily be understood by those not dedicated to the living practice.

Children have direct access to improvisatory attitudes. They create without judgment, without fear, with delight and abandon. With social and cultural conditioning, adults learn to fear risk taking as they make their place in society. As they become 'civilized,' an inner dialogue begins which negates artistry, which cautions against individual expression and the unconventional. This negation affects artists and their role in society, and society's relationship towards artistic expression.

This discussion will investigate these questions: Whether as witnesses or participants, what is this mysterious portal that champions of improvisation develop to counter this inner voice, to embrace intuition, accept the push-pull and intricately interweaved roles of commenter, leader, supporter, negator, instigator, present in collaborative improvisation? How does one remove the public and private filters that inhibit the acceptance of the unknown? With are these conditioned rules that stand in the way of expression, and what is it in us that allows us to accept abstraction and enter joyfully into the world of improvisation?

**Lisa Cay Miller** is the Managing Artistic Director of the NOW Society who proudly presents Vancouver best improvisors. She has produced concerts and multi-media installations (Vancouver New Music, Coastal Jazz and Blues Society, Circus Maximus, and the Western Front Society). Miller has performed with Nicole Mitchell, Butch Morris, John Zorn, Eyvind Kang, Audrey Chen, Ig Henneman, Wilbert de Joode, Anne La Berge, Michael Moore, and Joachim Badenhurst, Tiago de Mello, Lucas Rodrigues Ferreira, Roldolfo Valente, Marcio Gibson, Mario Del Nunzio and Pianoquestra Her CDs, The Lisa Miller Octet; *Sleep Furiously*, the music of Lisa Miller, Q, Q; *Waterwall* and The Lisa Miller Trio; open are available on the greenideas record label and have received rave international reviews.

### Stephanie Khoury

#### Re-imagining the role of improvisation in music education

The creative practice of improvisation should be at the core of all music education. By prioritizing the attainment of musical fluency over the study and memorization of pre-existing compositions, we provide music students with the musical agency so often lacking in today's musical training. In this way, music education becomes a true arts education based upon an organic process of action, discovery and expansion. Through improvisation, students attain a deeper integration of the fundamentals of music and are challenged to be active listeners, capable of making complex decisions in the moment. When improvising collectively, students are learning to communicate with the language of music, giving them with the ability to interact with other musical genres and cultures. Students widen their musical possibilities while developing their own creative voices.

This discussion considers the necessity, implications and potential considerations of a transformation to music education. The author's own ethnographic research examines the music teaching of improvisation in three distinct contexts: a community music school in inner city Houston (USA), an improvised modal counterpoint class at McGill University in Montreal (Canada), and an institute of improvised music in Salamanca (Spain). Examining pedagogy and practice in these locations in contrast to non-improvised musical contexts reveals a number of benefits and important considerations for the field of music education.

Among these considerations is the problematic nature of formalized improvisation pedagogy, such as those in jazz or Early Music. Strict adherence to extreme complexity of form and linguistic syntax is often impractical or disadvantageous. Finding an improvisatory practice which embraces differences and encourages creative expression is crucial for re-imagining music education. Freer forms of improvisation diminish reliance on particular stylistic know-how and open the practice to all, creating a space in which diverse backgrounds and musical influences enrich the musical process rather than restrict it.

A successful pedagogy of exploratory improvisation must necessarily disrupt traditional teacher-student models and invite



the unknown into the teaching environment. In the spirit of critical pedagogy, the teacher becomes learner along with the students, opening themselves to the unexpected in order to help each individual and the collective grow into its potential. Ultimately, the most successful teachers of improvisation are those able to improvise in their teaching, using the tools at hand to connect with students and decipher what is necessary in order to enable them to find confidence and their own voice.

**Stephanie Khoury** is a guitarist, educator, and PhD Candidate in music education at McGill University. Her research interests focus on different aspects of creative music education, ranging from improvisation pedagogy to community music. Currently she is conducting ethnographic research of experimental community music programs and working towards a complete overturn of music education as we know it.

### Don Ritter

#### From Improvisation to Conceptual Interactivity

Ritter provides an overview of his work on interactive performances and installations that are directed by improvised music or by the extemporaneous actions of audiences. The presentation includes a description of an interactive performance system that Ritter began

developing in 1988, and how it became the technical basis for his interactive video-sound installations that are controlled by body motion, position, or voice. The term conceptual interactivity is proposed to designate when the content of an artwork is conveyed to audiences experientially, through their physical interactions with a work. The presentation will include documentary videos of performances and installations that demonstrate the notion of conceptual interactivity and its relationship to improvisation.

**Don Ritter** is an artist and writer who has been active in the field of digital media art since the late-1980s. His work consists primarily of large interactive video and sound installations that audiences control through their body position, body movement, or voice. During his interactive performances, video projections are controlled by live music. Ritter's performances and installations have been presented at festivals, museums, and galleries throughout North America, Europe and Asia, including Ars Electronica, SITE Santa Fe, Winter Olympics 2010 Cultural Olympiad, Metrònom (Barcelona), Sonambiente Sound Festival (Berlin), Exit Festival (Paris), and New Music America (New York City and Montreal). He has collaborated on performances primarily with trombonist George Lewis, and also with musicians Nick Didkovsky, Amy Denio, Thomas Dimuzio, Ikue Mori, Geneviève Letarte, Ben Neill, Trevor Tureski, and Tom Walsh. Ritter has held full-time professorships in art and design at Concordia University in Montreal, Pratt Institute in New York City, Hanyang University in Seoul, and currently at City University of Hong Kong in the School of Creative Media.

## Friday 18.7.

### Paper session 3B (16:00 — 17:30)

Chaired by Miloš Vojtěchovský

### Video NoD

### Michael Pelz-Sherman

#### Parallels Between Improvisation and the Software Industry

Drawing upon my 20+ years of experience in software engineering, jazz improvisation, and music scholarship (PhD UCSD 1998), my presentation will explore the many parallels between recent trends in software development practices and musical improvisation. In the talk, I will demonstrate that changes in corporate software development management practices (an activity which employs a greater percentage of the world's population each year) is emblematic of a

paradigm shift brought about by forces of technological and social change which increasingly demand self-organization and team collaboration - aspects of improvised musical culture that have been well-documented e.g. by Macarthur "genius" grant recipient George E. Lewis (who was also my PhD advisor and who will be a keynote speaker at the conference).

The presentation format will be similar to that of a «TED talk». I plan to delve into the socio-political implications of the influence of improvisational practices into the culture of work. In particular I would like the audience to consider the implications of these issues

on education policies and standards. I intend to argue that to prepare students to enter the post-industrial workplace, our schools should be teaching improvisation as part of the standard core curriculum.

Freelance scholar and musician **Michael Pelz-Sherman** has been composing and performing professionally on piano, keyboards, and percussion since the age of 16. A graduate of Indiana University and UC San Diego Music programs, Michael has studied composition with Earl Browne, Donald Erb, Harvey Sollberger, Rand Steiger, Roger Reynolds, and Brian Ferneyhough. His compositions and recordings have received numerous awards. An accomplished software engineer and computer-musician, Michael served as a Musical Assistant at IRCAM (Paris) in the early 1990s, where he created an original real-time computer-assisted performance system and designed sounds for Netherlands composer Klass Torstensson's *Urban Songs*. Michael's Ph.D. dissertation, «A Framework for the Analysis of Performer Interactions in Improvised Music», created under the guidance of trombonist/improviser/author George E. Lewis, demonstrates his deep love for and understanding of the history, development, and structure of creative improvised music that has risen out of the fertile soil of American Jazz.

### **Rob Wallace** Passages to India

This presentation is a brief sketch of the historical connections, contradictions, and continuing dialogue between the music of South Asia (primarily in the form of Hindustani classical music) and improvised music stemming from the jazz tradition. Encounters between jazz and Indian music, occurring in myriad ways since the early 20th century, continue to produce important collaborations and cross-cultural conversations. Particularly in the period after World War Two, both jazz and Indian classical music became, in a sense, “post-colonial”—even as musicians from both traditions continued to face aesthetic-, ethnic-, racial-, gender-, and class-based discrimination at home and abroad, Indian music gained respect just as jazz gained a more explicitly global mindset.

One result of these developments was the increased dialogue, both metaphorical and literal, between American and Indian cultures. Within these conversations, however, remain some important misunderstandings on the part of both jazz musicians and Indian musicians. I meditate on the potential meanings of the cultural contact exhibited and sounded through Indian music and jazz fusions, specifically as they pertain to the dissemination of the philosophical ideas of Hazrat Inayat Khan—the early-20th century Sufi musician and writer whose work has influenced multiple generations of Westerners in their approach to both Indian music in particular and music in general. I also address the complexities of Ravi Shankar's attitude towards jazz, and the uneasy linkage (from the perspective of some Indian classical musicians) that many jazz musicians make between jazz improvisation and Hindustani improvisation. Ultimately I argue that, as in much improvised music, the risk of misunderstanding and failure, however

we might define those terms, is often outweighed by the improvisers' ability to learn from such failures and risks and grow musically (and possibly even politically and spiritually).

Writer, musician, and teacher **Rob Wallace** holds a Ph.D. in English Literature from the University of California, Santa Barbara. His recordings can be found on the pfMentum and Ambiances Magnétiques record labels. He is the author of *Improvisation and the Making of American Literary Modernism* (Bloomsbury) and co-editor (with Ajay Heble) of *People Get Ready: The Future of Jazz is Now!* (Duke).

### **Ricardo Arias** Improvisation in Contemporary Colombian Experimental Music and Sound Art

In this paper I will take a brief look at the history of improvised music in Colombia as well as to the current surge of its practice in recent exploratory music and sound art in the country. I will show how improvisation has served as a bridge between different musical practices (electroacoustic, folk, jazz, rock) and how this might begin to configure a particular type of improvisation that addresses local musical preoccupations and social dynamics.

**Ricardo Arias** is a Colombian experimental improvising musician, sound artist, teacher and researcher. For many years his work has focused on improvisation using unconventional sound sources both acoustic and electronic. More recently he has begun producing sound installations and sound sculptures. He has presented his work in the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Roulette Intermedium (New York), Experimental Intermedia Foundation (New York), Museum Kunst Palast (Düsseldorf), Galerie Rahel-Haferkamp (Cologne), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin), Ohrenhoch Gallery (Berlin), La Casa Encendida (Madrid), the Miró Foundation (Barcelona), The Electric Eclectics Festival (Meaford, Canada), FIMAV (Victoriaville, Canada), Experimenta Festival (Buenos Aires), Espace SD (Beirut) and the Colón Theater (Bogotá) among many other venues and festivals in North and South America, Europe and the Middle East. His writings have been published in *Experimental Musical Instruments* and the *Leonardo Music Journal*. He is active as a curator of sound art and experimental music exhibitions and festivals. Arias is Associate Professor in the Art Department at Universidad de Los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia.

### **Dimitris Papageorgiou** Searching for a voice: Free-Improvisation as self-experimentation

Starting with the assumption that improvisation is a spontaneous composition, I will follow the line of thought that enframes my aesthetic viewpoint and my practice as an improviser/composer. As Harry Lehmann suggests it is only now – after the legacy

of classical modernism, the avant-garde and postmodernism – that the medium, the concept and the work of art can be understood as separate entities; which reintroduced in the aesthetic apparatus with their particular degrees of freedom, enable us to see artworks as “the presentation of an experiential pattern inscribed upon the work of art that is taken up by the individual on a trial basis, and in some cases provokes a new self-understanding in society”. Therefore, an artwork can be understood as a Gestalt (Martin Heidegger) or a Morphe, that emerges from what Michel Serres has called Noise: the phenomenological strife experienced by facing the sonorous multitude. And within the word multitude we can perhaps trace the different perspectives carried by the networks one has been exposed to. In this sense, improvisation/composition practice can be seen as an explorative dynamic process, where the exercise turns into a self-experiment investigating the synthesis between the different realities inside oneself.

This self-explorative process, along with the different musical landscapes one has experienced and exercised, is perhaps one of the agents that gradually crystallizes the development of a personal sound library. Hence, the analysis of the medium (free-improvisation) could involve a negation of the material logic allowing space for more abstract categorizations, i.e. gestalt streaming, or cohabitation

in-time. In my presentation, I will try to bridge the Arab “Saltanah state” in maqam improvisation, with Evan Parker’s suggestion for “repetition, practice, memorization” and his seemingly contradictory call for an “unforeseeable state” while improvising, as the influences that merge into the concept of my practice. Where the work – a spontaneous composition – becomes the praxis of the experiment, governed by the “flow of music” (Malcolm Goldstein).

**Dimitris Papageorgiou** is a violinist, improviser and composer. He holds a Diploma in Classical Violin performance and Diplomas in Advanced Music Theory (Harmony, Counterpoint, Fugue) from Greek conservatories. He also holds a BSc degree in Physics from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, with a Bachelors thesis on the mathematical processes that Iannis Xenakis applied in his music. As a violinist, he has performed with various ensembles in Athens and in Edinburgh ranging from classical music (i.e. Greek National Opera), Greek folk/Middle-Eastern music, world/jazz music, and free-improvisation collectives. As a composer, his output so far includes solo, chamber, orchestral, electroacoustic, and acoustic music integrated with electronic sound structures. As a solo performer/improviser on the violin, he is trying to amalgamate a musical flow that ranges from extreme extended techniques and noise sounds, to folk music styles from the Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern maqam improvisation practices.

## Saturday 19.7.

Paper session 4A (13:00 – 14:30)

Chaired by David Rothenberg

### A Teatro

#### Lindsay Vickery

##### Improvising with the Sonic Environment

Emulation of the sounds of the natural environment may be one of the earliest manifestations of musical improvisation. Alvin Lucier’s (Hartford) Memory Space (1970) and Carbon Copies (1989) both explore this impulse, instructing performers to imitate the sounds of any indoor or outdoor environment (albeit pre-recorded), “as exactly as possible, without embellishment” (Lucier, A. 1989. Carbon Copies. Material Press: Frankfurt am Main). This paper describes a score-player, implemented in MaxMSP, which analyses and visualises significant features of a sonic environment as a graphic score, allowing an improviser to interact with a field recording. The visualised score is

scrolled from right to left across the computer screen. Playback of the source recording is delayed so that it is heard as the corresponding visual event arrives at the “playhead”: a black line on the left of the screen. The frequencies of principal features of the recorded environment are represented by the placement of rectangles in vertical space, amplitude by the size of the rectangle, and the brightness, noisiness and bark scale value of each event as the luminance, hue and saturation of each rectangle. The final three parameters provide an indication of timbral changes in the source recording. An analysis panel provides controls for the performer to view and scale data from the field recording, allowing the performer(s) to “zoom” in or out on a particular range of data.

Multiple scoreplayers may be networked together, allowing

multiple performers to interact with varied frequency, amplitude and amplitude parameters of the same recording. The "Environment Player" builds upon Vickery's earlier work EVP, in which "electronic voice phenomenon" recordings were visualised as a scrolling score in realtime. In the current work the performer may also choose to analyse the field recording to detect recorded speech or speech-like artifacts that may be present. These are represented in the score as standard text that is visualized using the frequency, amplitude, brightness, noisiness and bark scale values that are applied to non-speech sounds.

**Lindsay Vickery** is a founder member of Decibel, SQUINT, HEDKIKR and Magnetic Pig. As a performer he has played at numerous festivals including the Shanghai, Sydney, Adelaide and Perth International Arts Festivals, SWR Tage für Neue Musik, Audio Art Festival (PL), NWEAMO (US), ICMC, ISEA, MATA, NWEAMO, Scintilla Divina, NowNow and WHATISMUSIC?. He has collaborated with artists including: Alvin Curran (US), David Toop (UK), Marina Rosenberg (US), werner dafeldecker (DE), Agostino Di Scipio (IT), Lionel Marchetti (FR), Amy Knoles (US), Annie Gosfield (US), Roger Kleier (US), Graham Collier (UK), Marek Choloniewski (PL), Jon Rose, Stelarc, Clocked Out, Ensemble Offspring and The Tissue Culture and Art group. He writes on a range of topics, most recently on the emergence and development of the "screenscore", nonlinear music and the realisation of Cage's music. He is coordinator of Composition and Music Technology at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts at Edith Cowan University.

## Ursel Schlicht

### **SonicExchange: Film and Talk about a 100-day Residency**

SonicExchange took place in the summer of 2012 in the Kassel, Germany, and became a vibrant creative multidisciplinary project. My intent was to counteract the motto-driven cultural climate with open space and time, exchanging ideas through sound, dance, film and related art. Over fifty guests participated, from nine countries. Among them were free improvisers, composers, an Afghan poet and rubab player, dancers, electronic musicians.

I purposely sought a location not connected with a particular aesthetic and found the Foto-Motel, an artistic guest house with studios for visual artists and a low-key and intimate setting. The first and only musician there, the hosts provided me a small studio and gave me carte blanche to use the adjacent lounge as a performance space, a large yard for performances outside, film screenings, also allowing communication between inside and outside. The flexibility and simplicity was perfect for spontaneous programming of performances, sessions, talks.

Dancers performed in the yard, artists showed films with live music in the lounge or projected outside on the wall. Five pianists created an evening of pianism around one piano. Composers spoke about their music and then improvised with other musicians. Five musicians arranged Icelandic songs as a quintet with voice, piano,

accordion, violin and electronics. Others interpreted Afghan poetry and tales. As the ongoing avant-art exhibition Documenta(13) in Kassel transformed the entire city with literally hundreds of exhibitions, many of us were also very inspired by the visual arts.

The name SonicExchange reflects the concept of meeting on equal grounds rather than a hierarchically structured or curated situation. Each participant had to make a conscious choice to be there, I did not invite or select. This led to a mix of local and international encounters. Interestingly, the gender balance was almost equal – unheard of in most festival lineups. Many events were filmed and we produced a two-hour long DVD. The DVD contains an 15-min introductory film about the idea and the process, followed by chapters showing thirteen concert events, and a chapter crediting all participants and supporters. I would like to discuss how improvisation has the power to connect artists from many disciplines across aesthetics, cultural differences, or language barriers, show excerpts of the film, and focus on a few events where borders were crossed in particularly successful ways.

Pianist **Ursel Schlicht** plays improvised music, jazz, new music, and is a scholar and educator currently teaching Improvisation at the University of Kassel. Fostering intercultural collaboration has been an important focus of her work. She has brought together musicians from Europe, India, Eritrea, Mali, Japan, Afghanistan, Russia, and the USA, notably in her project Ex Tempore. Her compositions interweave notated and improvised material, and she interprets silent film classics Nosferatu, The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Faust, and The Adventures of Prince Achmed with an avant-improv approach. Her work as leader or co-leader appears on Nemu, Cadence, CIMP, Hybrid, Konnex, Muse-Eek and Leo Records, with Robert Dick, Hans Tammen, Steve Swell, Lou Grassi, Ken Filiano, Bruce Arnold, Reuben Radding, et al. she is part of Hans Tammen's Third Eye Orchestra on innova records; forthcoming is a CD The Galilean Moons with Robert Dick. Ursel Schlicht holds a doctorate in musicology from the University of Hamburg, Germany, and has published a book about the working conditions of women jazz musicians, including Marian McPartland, Carline Ray, Joanne Brackeen, Connie Crothers, Jane Ira Bloom and Myra Melford. She has designed and taught seminars on Music & Gender and Improvisation at Ramapo College of New Jersey, and has taught Masterpieces of Western Music at Columbia University in New York.

## Lukas Ligeti

### **Between and Beyond Frontiers: Journeys of Improvised Music in Africa**

Many West African music traditions and forms (my initial experiences were in Côte d'Ivoire) have contributed to the fundamental concepts of jazz, and in working with musicians from these traditions, it is possible to see some of the basic ingredients of American improvised music at work. The rules governing improvisation in these traditions are often quite complex, but, as in jazz, they build upon and further permit, to a degree, spontaneous interaction between

musicians, allowing for conversational interplay. However, there also exist music traditions - I have come across these mainly in other parts of Africa such as Uganda - where improvisation is rather limited and does not strongly impact the overall form of the music.

I have attempted many approaches to improvisation in my African collaborations, ranging from collective free improvisation (an activity otherwise nonexistent in this part of the world) to collectively developing frameworks and rules for interplay. In some instances, I encouraged musicians to appropriate concepts from other music traditions or cultures as part of our nascent improvisational vocabulary. Some approaches employed computer technology as an additional challenge or as an aid in performance, acting as a conductor of sorts. In a band I co-founded in Burkina Faso, Ableton Live is used extensively, but a complex cueing system is simultaneously in place to help make our performances more flexible and spontaneous. But I have also done more «straightforward» improvising in contexts such as the ever popular «jam sessions» and played jazz standards with African musicians: many musicians I have worked with consider themselves jazz musicians, but the way they handle rhythm and form tends to be somewhat different from their American colleagues, informed by the traditions of the region and by local patterns of jazz reception (which are often strongly dependent on the selection of imported recordings, a dependency now in decline due to the internet, but still relevant).

Transcending the boundaries of genre, the Austrian, New-York-City-based composer-percussionist **Lukas Ligeti** has developed a musical style of his own that draws upon downtown New York experimentalism, contemporary classical music, jazz, electronica, as well as world music, particularly from Africa. Known for his non-conformity and diverse interests, Lukas creates music ranging from the through-composed to the free-improvised, often exploring polyrhythmic/polytempo structures, non-tempered tunings, and non-western elements. Other major sources of inspiration include experimental mathematics, computer technology, architecture and visual art, sociology and politics, and travel. He has also been participating in cultural exchange projects in Africa for the past 15 years. His commissions include Bang on a Can, the Vienna Festwochen, Ensemble Modern, Kronos Quartet, Colin Currie and Håkan Hardenberger, the American Composers Forum, New York University, ORF Austrian Broadcasting Company, Radio France, and more; he also regularly collaborates with choreographer Karole Armitage. As a drummer, he co-leads several bands and has performed and/or recorded with John Zorn, Henry Kaiser, Raoul Björkenheim, Gary Lucas, Michael Manring, Marilyn Crispell, Benoit Delbecq, Jim O'Rourke, Daniel Carter, John Tchicai, Eugene Chadbourne, and many others. He performs frequently on electronic percussion often using the marimba lumina, a rare instrument invented by California engineer Don Buchla.

## **Michael Francis Duch and Bjørnar Habbestad**

### **Lemur – Methods and Music**

What constitutes the core of our collaboration, what comes across as important in the development of our musical and improvisational practice? We present three potentially important aspects: first, a sonic approach to developing musical material. Secondly, an interest in practising and finally, the different improvisational approach of the ensembles members.

At our very first rehearsal, before we had played our first concert together, we found a shared interest in the actual sound of the ensemble. This sonic approach has influenced our way of discussing, rehearsing, performing and creating together. During these last eight years we have also met regularly for practise and rehearsals in between tours and recordings. This, we believe, is something that is less common in Free Improvisation than in other musics. Our concerts are always free improvised, but listeners comment that the ensemble sounds rehearsed or even composed. We believe that this is related to our rehearsals and methods of practise, creating our own exercises to shape textures, material and interplay.

The background and aesthetic preferences and playing styles of each member of Lemur varies. While Grenager and Habbestad both have their background and formal training from classical music, Tafjord and Duch both have backgrounds and formal training in Jazz and improvisation. This often results in several “styles” operating individually and melting together at the same time, rather than a specific area that all four are striving for together. More importantly we share a broad spectrum of different practise methods and techniques that we employ in making our own methods and exercises.

When improvising in ad hoc-situations certain techniques or musical clichés may not sound as clichés at all. Whereas in an ensemble playing with some regularity, like Lemur, using the same type of material gets musically challenged and confronted in a way that does not happen in ad hoc-situations. An ensemble that plays together often, playing the same material could eventually lead to playing the equivalent of “songs” or “tunes”, rather than Free Improvisation. One of the important issues this paper questions is whether this form of music-making is less “free” or less improvised than that of other free improvising ensembles? We strongly believe that the very opposite can be true, largely based on our own experiences from being members of Lemur.

**Michael Francis Duch** is a double bass-player and Associate Professor at the Department of Music, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim. He completed his project “Free Improvisation – Method and Genre: Artistic Research in Free Improvisation and Improvisation in Experimental Music” through the Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowship Programme at NTNU late October 2010. He has been involved in more than 40 recordings including the critically acclaimed Cornelius Cardew: Works 1960-70 with the trio Tilbury/Duch/Davies. Duch regularly performs improvised and composed music both solo and with various ensembles.

**Bjørnar Habbestad** is a flutist and research fellow at the Norwegian Academy of Music, educated in musica, art history and philosophy from Bergen, London and Amsterdam. Habbestad works as a soloist, chamber- and ensemble musician in Scandinavia, Europe, Asia and the US, covering musical grounds from classical

contemporary to noise, electro-acoustic and free improvised music. He is a founding member of the N-Collective, Artistic Director of +3DB records and a co-curator at Lydgalleriet, a Bergen based gallery for sound art.

## Saturday 19.7.

### Paper session 4B (13:00 — 14:30)

Chaired by Allison Johnson

### Video NoD

#### Amandine Pras

**Different approaches to free music improvisation in New York**

New York played a crucial role in the history of music improvisation with the rise of free jazz in the 1960s and the emergence of noise in the 1980s. At present, the city encompasses a dynamic live scene attracting musicians from a great variety of origins. The boundaries between the two American post-war traditions of non-idiomatic improvisation distinguished by George Lewis, namely the Afrological and Eurological perspectives are not clear anymore: the notions of Afro-centricity and Euro-centricity have expanded to other cultures and improvisers from diverse musical backgrounds share the stage, thus their approaches blend musically to create a unique art form.

In this paper we investigate the different creative concepts and artistic intentions of improvisers who perform on the same scene in New York. Our ethnographic study involves twelve New-York-based professional improvisers having more than fifteen years of international career. Between 30 and 70 years old, these musicians grew up in different countries such as France, Germany, Japan, and USA, with African-American, European, Moroccan, Israeli and Mexican origins. They were formally trained in straight-the-head jazz or classical music, and/or informally learned on the job by playing pop-rock covers or Latin music.

Our qualitative methods combine individual interviews and group listening sessions of concert recordings with the musicians. We will present the improvisers' verbal descriptions of their own definition of free improvisation; their experience when they are improvising; and the possible connections between their practice of free improvisation and their personal life, political convictions and spiritual practices. We will illustrate our presentation with excerpts

of concert recordings.

Artistic freedom has been defined in the individual interviews with contrary opinions. We have observed strong differences among the improvisers' creative processes, ranging from the avoidance of thinking to intense thought activity. While all mention the interdependence between their improvisation practice and their personal life, political and/or spiritual connections remain strictly individual and vary in their degree of significance. Although these diverse approaches to free improvisation are influenced by different cultural traditions, they do not prevent musicians from performing together.

These findings allow us to grasp the complexities of personal expression as opposed to artistic traditions. A discussion between these findings and a literature review on the different approaches to free improvisation will contribute to our understanding of how musicians with diverse cultural backgrounds improvise with each other.

**Amandine Pras** is conducting research with the free improvisation scene of New York City. Her study focuses on the musicians' experience when they are improvising and the relationship between this experience and the musical result. She is currently a Visiting Scholar at The New School of Social Research in New York with a postdoctoral grant from the Fonds de Recherche Société et Culture of Québec (FQRSC). She holds a PhD in Information Sciences from McGill University in Montréal about the best practices to produce musical recordings in the digital era and she graduated from the Music and Sound Recording program of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris (CNSMDP) in 2006. Amandine teaches musical recording techniques at the Steinhardt School of New York University since 2012. In parallel to her academic activities, she works as a record producer and a sound engineer in different countries and for a great variety of artistic projects.



## Charles Bramley

Too important to be left to the Musicians: building socio-musical activism through un-Musical improvised practice.

Communities of musical improvisation have long utilised the rhetoric of revolution and rebellion, yet haven't typically addressed internal flaws in their social organisation that diminish the social relevance and activist potential of their practice. This paper will argue that because the vast majority of improvised practice is the domain of highly trained musicians, it preserves notions of professionalism and specialism that betray what is a key activist potential of this approach to music: its anarchic breakdown of the binary boundaries: 'professional'/'amateur'; 'musician'/'non musician'; 'musical'/'unmusical'. While these communities often provide valuable resistance to various oppressive ideologies, they can at the same time further perpetuate existing ones. A learn the rules before you break them maxim perpetuates the existing order of a music for musicians culture, and is a key contributing factor to the continuing preservation of a stubborn and inert musical environment.

What is sometimes forgotten is that it's not just the so-called formal institutions of universities, schools and conservatoire's that regurgitate these stale ideologies - it's also apparent in those so-called informal, 'experimental' organisations who inscribe their surface output with labels of rebellion, revolution and experimentation, yet beneath the surface of their own myths, expose the inert odour of a politician's internet search history. They replace the funk odour with the odour of bleach. For a completely untrained performer like myself, someone who has been labelled 'unmusical' many times, it becomes extremely tiresome reading promotional literature on how revolutionary various improvised practices are, when the fundamental modes of operation remain utterly fixed in orthodox tradition, privilege and exclusion (sometimes wittingly, sometimes not). Whatever experimentation or deviation from the orthodox has occurred, you better believe in the virtuosic quality inherent in these musicians. That way, it keeps the deviation sterile, safe, and removes the deviant danger from it. You are safe in these people's hands. It's not 'just noise', or total chaotic nonsense, they really know what they are doing because they are professional musicians playing professional music. Nauseating and repulsively stale.

I will present various case studies of a particular model of improvised practice that explicitly works to undo the dominant conception of musicality that is allowed to stratify the musical environment into those who 'can' and those who 'cannot'. un-Musical activism encourages so-called 'non-musicians' to hear beyond specialist binary boundaries and actively participate in the creation of their own musical knowledge(s). It does this by firstly, creating opportunities in which to overcome the ideologies that constrain music-making (usually in the form of regular informal workshops) and secondly, by building long-term social engagement through regular recording sessions and performance events. For improvised music to be socially relevant, it cannot continue to ignore such activist potential by cultivating yet more specialist musical communities, precisely because for those on

the outside of specialist musical knowledge, music typically instills a deeply rooted fear of playing - and it's this absurd reality that demands an un-Musical activism.

**Charles Bramley** is a 3rd year PhD student based within the School of Arts and Cultures, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, under supervision by Dr. William Edmondson and Dr. Elaine Campbell. As a completely un-trained musician and someone who has been labelled 'unmusical' before, he utilises auto-ethnographic methods and case studies to demonstrate the need for un-Musical activism. He is a regular participant in various improvised music activity in Newcastle, including the monthly performance event 'Blue Rinse', the record label 'Felt Beak' and my own weekly improvised music sessions which are open-access.

## Laurel Felt

Improvisation: The Key to 21st Century Learning

Public health scholars, marriage and family therapists, and organizational communication consultants are just some of the experts who have contributed to our extensive documentation of how culture — practices, values, and norms — impacts psychosocial development and learning outcomes. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the culture of a learning space (e.g., a classroom, a laboratory, an after-school workshop, etc) also will influence students' functioning. Research by Yeager & Walton (2011) supports this conclusion. Their meta-analysis of «non-academic» interventions found that students' participation in social-psychological programs that addressed cultural issues (e.g., students' implicit theories of intelligence, subjective norms, appreciation of course material's relevance, communities of practice, and support networks) led to large gains in student achievement and sharply reduced achievement gaps even months and years later (p. 267).

Rich academic literature and my own personal experiences as an educator, student and improvisational actor inform my conceptualization of an ideal 21st century learning culture. I submit that, in order to optimize students' likelihood of developing skills across cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains, their learning cultures should facilitate student engagement, empowerment, and connection. Moreover, improvisation, particularly improvisational theater, is a growth-medium for this culture. Improvisation's norms cultivate the ideal culture of engagement, empowerment, and connection, and its practices cultivate 21st century skills. By applying improvisation as a pedagogical model, and also by physically improvising, members of learning communities can facilitate 21st century learning, which implies more innovative academic work and healthier social functioning.

This paper reviews three workshops offered by Laughter for a Change (L4C), a Los Angeles-based non-profit that brings improvisational theater workshops to at-risk and underserved populations (e.g., veterans, urban youth) to facilitate healing and community-building. The workshops under review all operated on a weekly basis for at

least eight works, offering a group of approximately 10 youths the opportunity to develop improvisational acting skills by playing theater games. By analyzing these cases, I hope to gain insight into the following questions: RQ1: To what extent, if any, did each workshop's learning culture seek to facilitate learners' engagement, empowerment, and connection? RQ2: How does the presence or absence of 21st century learning culture (e.g., engagement, empowerment, and connection) relate to 21st century learning outcomes (e.g., cognitive/head, intrapersonal/heart, interpersonal/hands)?

**Laurel Felt** is a PhD candidate at USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism and a veteran improvisational theater actor. Over the years, Laurel has co-designed and assessed various after-school, arts-based workshops for youths in such cities as Los Angeles, Dakar, and Mumbai; collectively, these experiences suggest that improvisation is key to 21st century learning. Laurel applies this educational insight as an Instructional Design Specialist with the USC Joint Educational Project (one of the largest service-learning organizations in the United States) and as a columnist for KCET Departures, covering youth civic media-making.

### **Ritwik Banerji** **Bourdieu's Improviser**

Pierre Bourdieu's treatment of improvisation in his theories of practice and the habitus stand among the earliest discussions of improvisation as a critical dimension of human social practice, and not merely an element of aesthetic action. His work places improvisation within the fundamental sociological question of how structure and agency mediate one another in the reproduction of social orders. Though they themselves may not be fully conscious of the social formations they exist within, Bourdieu's improvisers are those whose performances contribute to the perpetuation, rather than challenge, of ongoing social orders. Crucially, this conception of improvisation

invites a critique of notions of freedom and non-idiomaticity in improvisation, calling attention to the paradoxical manner by which a putatively free improvisation comes to elaborate structure in performance.

In this paper, I will examine Bourdieu's engagement of improvisation in his conceptualization of self-reproducing social orders in order to sketch an analytic framework for the emergent elaboration of structure through collective action in indeterminate conditions, or in a word (perhaps), improvisation. Beyond Kabylia, Algeria, where is Bourdieu's improviser? What is the purchase of his particular conception of improvisation in the understanding of improvised practice across art and sociality? Principally, I will consider several discussions of improvisation in theater, music, and systems theory which purport the emergence of recognizable structure from the distributed action of individual agents, each unaware of and unable to predict the overall aggregated structure beforehand. Moreover, as Keith Sawyer suggests, certain desirable structures of improvisation are perhaps unattainable in conditions in which actors are intending and aware of the target structure. This paper considers Bourdieu's improviser as a means of outlining the productive and sustaining consequences of collective improvisations in art and social practice. How might a Bourdieuan improvisation function integrally in the optimal production of a particular structure, whether aesthetic, social, or technical?

**Ritwik Banerji** is a graduate student ethnomusicology at the University of California, Berkeley. His research revolves around the development of an interactive musical agent, known as "Maxine", who functions as a co-ethnographer in the study of the interplay of ethics and aesthetics in the real-time interactions of free improvisation. With Maxine he has performed in India, Spain, Germany, Austria, Brazil and the US, with a recording of this duo project soon to be released on pfMentum Records. As a Fulbright Journalism and Berlin Program fellow at the Freie Universität-Berlin, Banerji will conduct an ethnographic project on Echtzeitmusik, a scene and discourse of improvisation steadily more active since the fall of the Communism.



## Saturday 19.7.

Paper session 5 (15:00 — 17:30)

### A Teatro

#### Peter Heltzel

**Love Supreme: Improvising for the Common Good**

Improvisation is the heart of jazz and religion. In contrast to static concepts of religion in the shadow of modernity, jazz music offers an alternative approach to theology that is subversive and transformative. A jazz approach to religion, improvises on tradition(s). Jazz never simply argues or critiques; it riffs on themes, transforms or transposes them, and subverts especially popular forms of culture by making them better. John Coltrane's *Love Supreme* offers a model of improvisation on the love motif, deepening its musical and meditative dimensions. Coltrane's improvisation on love opens up the possibility of improvising for love in a broader, public and political way. The principle of improvisation in jazz offers a good model for academically-informed theology for the people. As a method, it also resembles Jesus' loving but subversive riffing on Second Temple Judaism. In the spirit of Jesus' whose teaching of the Kingdom inspires us to work for the common good, faith leaders today need to improvise for love and justice.

**Peter Heltzel**, an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), is the Director of the Micah Institute and Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at New York Theological Seminary. Rev. Heltzel holds a B.A. from Wheaton College, a M.Div. from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and earned his Ph.D. from Boston University. A gifted writer, Rev. Heltzel has contributed to seven books as author or editor. He has published numerous articles in journals, such as *Books & Culture*, *Science & Theology News*, *Sojourners*, *Political Theology*, *Princeton Theological Review* and the *Scottish Journal of Theology*. He serves on the Metro Commission on the Ministry and the Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Team of the Northeastern Region, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and is Associate Professor of Theology at the New York Theological Seminary.

#### James Falzone

**The Already and the Not Yet: Improvisation and Theology in Dialogue in Chicago**

Contemporary theologians, ever looking for metaphors for understanding "the nature of God and religious experience," are turning to the arts in general and improvisation in specific, as means to convey the complexity of theological discourse to everyday people. What had once been an antagonistic relationship between theology and the arts is now a rich, open, and far-reaching dialogue with improvisation as a significant theme. Leading Christian theologian N.T. Wright, as one example, has posited that the central mission of a person of faith is to "discover, through the spirit and prayer, the appropriate ways of improvising the script with constant attention." If we understand "script" in this sense to be the sacred scriptures, the traditions of Christian practice, and the life of the local church, than Wright is suggesting an improvised life of faith based on study, fidelity, and community. As a further example of this ongoing conversation, consider a survey of recent titles in theology: *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics* (Samuel Wells, 2004), *Theology as Improvisation: A Study in the Musical Nature in Theological Thinking* (Nathan Crawford, 2012), *Resurrection City: A Theology of Improvisation* (Peter Heltzel, 2013).

For the past 12 years I have developed a unique perspective on this dialogue as I have gone about my work as a musical artist (clarinetist and composer), teacher, and scholar, focusing on improvised music, while simultaneously serving as Director of Music and Resident Composer at Grace Chicago Church, a small congregation on the north side of Chicago. This collective work, reaching across the border of the secular and the sacred, has led me to observe a number of connections between practices important in improvised music and how I see the parishioners I serve "improvising the script with constant attention," to borrow N.T. Wright's phrase above. When theology is being performed, like great improvisation, there is no grand system at work but rather a series of in-the-moment decisions that rest upon years of experience and study, all funneled through

the mystery of intuition.

My presentation will examine the conference question of how non-artists improvise. I will look at this phenomenon both individually (the parishioners I serve) and collectively (the parish as a whole). Drawing on my dual experience as a working, improvising musician and as a church musician, I will show how the work of the improviser is a mirror for how a person lives out theological concepts in their everyday experience as they seek to reconcile issues of faith and social justice. I will frame my discussion around three main themes I see at work in improvisation and practical theology: the need to disappear (so that something far greater can appear), the recognition of one's place in the "story" (what I refer to as The Already and the Not Yet, borrowing a phrase from early 19th century Dutch theologian Geerhardis Vos), and the importance of risk.

Multi-faceted clarinetist/composer **James Falzone** is an acclaimed member of Chicago's jazz and creative improvised music scene, a veteran contemporary music lecturer and clinician, the longtime Director of Music for Grace Chicago Church and an award-winning composer who has been commissioned by chamber ensembles, choirs and symphony orchestras around the globe. He leads his own ensembles KLANG, The Renga Ensemble, and Allos Musica and has released eight highly regarded recordings on Allos Documents, a label he founded in 2000. James has performed in recital halls, festivals and jazz venues throughout North America and Europe, appears regularly on Downbeat magazine's Critics' and Readers' Polls, and was nominated as the 2011 Clarinetist of the Year by the Jazz Journalist Association. His work has been featured in the New York Times, The Chicago Tribune, New Music Box, Point of Departure, and many other publications.



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**VS. INTERPRETATION  
FESTIVAL AND  
SYMPOSIUM 2014**

**PRESENTED BY THE AGOSTO  
FOUNDATION**

MAIN PARTNERS: EXPERIMENTAL SPACE  
NOD, ŠKOLSKÁ 28 GALLERY

## SCHEDULE

### NOTE ABOUT TICKETS:

Tickets are available for online purchase for workshops, 1 Day passes and 3 Day festival passes. Tickets for individual events may be purchased on site.

YOU MAY PURCHASE TICKETS BY  
CLICKING ON TICKET BUTTONS BELOW  
OR AT: GOOUT.CZ

## JULY 16, 2014

LOCATION: NOD, DLOUHÁ 33, PRAGUE 1

### **18:00 Reception**

Meet and greet.

## TEATRO

**20:00 - 21:00 Performance**

Ivan Palacký, Dafne Vicente-Sandoval

Morgan O`Hara

**21:00 - 22:00 Performance**

Prague Improvisation Orchestra

## TICKETS

JULY 17, 2014

LOCATION: NOD, DLOUHÁ 33, PRAGUE 1

## TEATRO

## VIDEO NOD

**09:30-10:45 — Keynote****1**

George E. Lewis

**11:00-12:30 — Paper****Session 1A**

Jason Robinson  
*: Improvisation and  
 Telematics: Toward an  
 Understanding of Latency  
 and Interactivity in  
 Networked Performance*

Ian Mikyska : *Lines and  
 Sounds: Hermeneutics of  
 Multimedia Improvisation*

Christopher Williams  
*: Long-Term*

**11:00-12:30 — Paper  
Session 1B**

Michael Gardiner  
*: Spectral Fizz and the  
 Image of Extended  
 Perceptions: Theory qua  
 Improvisation*

Cat Hope : *Scoring for  
 Music Improvisation: The  
 Potential of Digital  
 Graphic Notations for  
 Improvising Ensembles*

Marcel Cobussen

*Improvisation,  
Groundwave Rondo, and  
The Barcelona Chronicles*

Reinhard Gagel: *OHO!  
Offhand Opera, A Model  
for Creating Musical  
Forms in the Course of  
Performance*

#### TEATRO

**12:30-13:00**  
**--Performance**

Edward Powell

*: Technology as an Actant  
in the Field of Musical  
Improvisation*

Rogério Costa, Felipe  
Merker Castellani &  
Alessandra Bochio :  
*Mirror I, Hybrid  
Environments of Collective  
Creation: Composition,  
Improvisation, and Live  
Electronics*

#### VIDEO NOD

**13:00-14:00 —**  
**Discussion**

Charivari -  
INTERDISCIPLINARY  
PANEL discussion

Ewan McLaren, Pavel  
Klusák, Tomáš Ruller, Ivan  
Palacký, Zdeněk  
Konopásek, Petr Vrba,  
moderated by  
Miloš Vojtěchovský.

This panel presents several  
local artists, journalists  
and/or organizers who will  
discuss their opinions,  
or views on the theme of  
the symposium, seen from  
their experiences and  
perspectives: performance,  
music, architecture, visual

**15:00-16:30 —**  
**Workshop**

Joëlle Léandre

art, humanities, etc.

**14:00-15:00 —****Workshop** (free)

Vanessa Tomlinson +

Allison Johnson

**18:00 - 18:30 —****Performance**

Michal Rataj, Jaromír

Typlt

**16:30-17:30 —****Performance and Talk**

Mary Oliver

**20:00-22:00 —****Performance**

George E. Lewis, Pauline

Oliveros, Joëlle Léandre

**19:30-20:30 —****Performance**

Pasi Mäkelä and Federsel

(Tomáš Procházka)

**22:15-23:00 —****Performance**

Marco Eneidi

**TICKETS****JULY 18, 2014**

LOCATION: NOD, DLOUHÁ 33, PRAGUE 1

TEATRO

**09:30-10:45 — Keynote****2**

Pauline Oliveros

11:30 - 12:30 —

**Performance**

Jeffrey Goldberg

12:30 - 13:00 — LUNCHTIME

## TEATRO

## VIDEO NOD

**14:00-15:30 — Paper  
Session 2A**

Lucie Vítková : *Composing  
Situations: Improvisation  
in the Music of Christian  
Wolff\**

Emmanuel

Nnamani : *Improvisation,  
Catharsis and Creativity  
on the Beat and In Tune:  
Perspectives on Structures,  
Images and the Message in  
Fela's Afrobeat Music*

Andrew Wilson : *Musical  
Prose, Dada, and Jazz: A  
Case Study of Erwin  
Schulhoff's Improvisations  
praxis*

Kevin

McNeilly : *Possibility  
Abstracts: Taylor Ho  
Bynum, Nathaniel Mackey  
and Discrepancy*

\* Czech/English  
interpreter support will be  
provided"

**15:30-16:00 —****14:00-15:30 — Paper  
Session 2B**

Vanessa Tomlinson : *Listen  
to the Sound of Your  
Imagination: An  
Exploration of  
Imaginative Listening*

Marc Hannafor : *Black  
Saturday, Planning and  
Improvisation*

Ximena

Alarcon : *Telematic  
Embodiments: Listening to  
the 'In-Between' within  
Migratory Contexts*

Ivan Palacký : *Sentences to  
Tell Over: Interferences  
between Improvisation in  
Music and Architecture \**

\* Czech/English

interpreter support will be  
provided"

**16:00-17:30 — Paper  
Session 3B**



**Performance**

Lisa Cay Miller

Michael

Pelz-Sherman : *Agile Jazz:**Improvisation in the**Post-Industrial Workplace***16:00-17:30 — Paper****Session 3A**Simon Rose : *The Agency  
of Improvisation*Rob Wallace : *Passages to  
India*Lisa Cay Miller : *Talking  
Improv: Removing the  
Civil Censor*Ricardo  
Arias : *Improvisation in  
Contemporary Colombian  
Experimental Music and  
Sound Art*Stephanie  
Khoury : *Reimagining the  
Role of Improvisation in  
Music and Education*Dimitris  
Papageorgiou : *Searching  
for a Voice:  
Free-Improvisation as  
Self-Experimentation*Don Ritter : *From  
Improvisation to  
Conceptual Interactivity***18:00-18:30 —****Performance**

Lucie Vítková

**19:30-20:30 —****Performance**

Morgan O`Hara

Phill Niblock, Katherine

Liberovskaya

**18:30-19:30 —****Performance**Petr Kotík, Barbora  
Sojková, and company**20:30-21:30 —****Performance**Annie Gosfield (piano and  
sampling keyboard)Annie Gosfield (piano and  
sampling keyboard) and  
Roger Kleier (electric  
guitar)

**22:00-23:00 —****Performance**

Iva Bittová

**TICKETS****JULY 19, 2014**

LOCATION: NOD, DLOUHÁ 33, PRAGUE 1

TEATRO

**9:00-10:45 —****Workshop**

Iva Bittová

**10:45-12:00 —****Workshop**Deep Listening with  
Pauline Oliveros

12:30-13:00 — LUNCHTIME

TEATRO

**13:00-14:30 — Paper  
Session 4A**Lindsay  
Vickery : *Improvising with  
the Sonic Environment*

Ursel

VIDEO NOD

**13:00-14:30 — Paper  
Session 4B**Amandine Pras : *Different  
Approaches to Free Music  
Improvisation in New  
York*

Schlicht : *SonicExchange:  
Film and Talk about a  
100-day Residency*

Lukas Ligeti : *Between and  
Beyond Frontiers:  
Journeys of Improvised  
Music in Africa*

Michael Duch, Bjørnar  
Habbestad: *Lemur -  
Methods and Music:  
Practising Improvisation  
and Rehearsing with an  
Improvising Ensemble*

**15:00-17:30 — Paper  
Session 5**

Peter Heltzel : *Love  
Supreme: Improvising for  
the Common Good*

James Falzone : *The  
Already and the Not Yet:  
Improvisation and  
Theology in Practice in  
Chicago*

Charlie Bramley : *Too  
Important to Be Left to the  
Musicians: Building Socio-  
Musical Activism through  
Un-Musical Improvised  
Practice*

Laurel Felt :  
*Improvisation: The Key to  
21st Century Learning*

Ritwik Banerji : *Bourdieu's  
Improviser*

**15:00-17:30 —  
Workshop (free)**  
Markus Popp

**17:30-18:00 —  
Performance**  
Lukas Ligeti

**18:00-19:00 —  
Performance**  
David Rothenberg

**19:00-20:30 —  
Performance**  
Dawn of Midi

**21:00-22:00 —  
Performance**  
Markus Popp

**22:00-22:30 —**

**Performance**

Stratocluster

**TICKETS****JULY 20, 2014**LOCATION: ŠKOLSKÁ 28 GALLERY,  
ŠKOLSKÁ 28, PRAGUE 1VS. INTERPRETATION JAM SESSIONS -  
OPEN STAGE

FROM 10 AM TO 9:30 PM

Školská 28 Gallery is pleased to offer the space for the *vs.*  
*Interpretation* festival participants who are interested to  
perform on the last day of the festival on July 20th.

The venue (Školská 28 Gallery) is about 20min walking  
distance from the main festival venue (NoD/Roxy). More  
info about the space can be found at:

<http://skolska28.cz/skolska-28-gallery>

**PRELIMINARY PROGRAM**

free entrance, refreshments served

**Morgan O'Hara:***Live Transmission*

The Sunday program at Školská 28 Gallery offers an opening  
for an exhibit of drawings recording the movement of sound

and musicians by visual artist and performer Morgan  
O`Hara.

**Jennifer Helia de Felice and company**

Music Workshop for Children

*That Sounds Great!*

*Experiencing Sound*

*Sunday, July 20th, from 10:30 - 1 PM*

An informal meeting of young minds led by Opossum,  
Fox, Butterfly, Whale  
(Petr Anton, Jennifer Helia DeFelice, Tomáš Jenček, Beata  
Spáčilová)  
Have you ever listened to the sound of your own  
footsteps?  
Join us for an informal meeting where we will try to share  
our experiences of sound and inspire each other to create  
and listen to our own unique sounds.

**The Pololániks:**

Improvised Set

**Noční pták/Night Bird:**

Luboš Fidler a Zdeněk Konopásek

**Lindsay Vickery & Vanessa Tomlinson:**

4 pieces 4 clarinet, bassclarinet, live electronics and objects

**DETAILS OF THE VENUE**

We ask those interested to perform to send a short  
description of their performance as well as a short bio to  
**Michal Kindernay** to [michal@skolska28.cz](mailto:michal@skolska28.cz) with whom  
you can discuss further technical questions.

We leave an open schedule for performances from 3 PM to  
9:30 PM and, with respect to high interest, the performance

times shall be appropriated a maximum of 30 min.

#### TECHNICAL MEANS AVAILABLE

2 active speakers Mackie

2 active speakers Yamaha

audiomix Mackie

video projector

cables

3 mic stands





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NEWS ABOUT ARTIST RESIDENCY VS. INTERPRETATION CONTACT



## FEATURED WORKSHOPS

### JOËLLE LÉANDRE

#### DATE AND LOCATION

17 July 2014, 15:00-16:30

Experimental Space NoD, Dlouhá 33, Prague 1

Teatro

#### BIO

French double bass player, improviser and composer, Joëlle Léandre is one of the dominant figures of the new European music. Trained in orchestral as well as contemporary music, she has played with l'Itinéraire, 2e2m and Pierre Boulez's Ensemble Intercontemporain. Joëlle Léandre has also worked with Merce Cunningham and with John Cage, who has composed especially for her – as have Scelsi, Fénelon, Hersant, Lacy, Campana, Jolas, Clementi and about 40 composers.

As well as working in contemporary music, Léandre has played with some of the great names in jazz and improvisation, such as Derek Bailey, Anthony Braxton, George Lewis, Evan Parker, Irene Schweizer, William Parker, Barre Phillips, Pascal Contet, Steve Lacy, Lauren Newton, Peter Kowald, Urs Leimgruber, Mat Maneri, Roy Campbell, Fred Frith, John Zorn,

Mark Naussef, Marilyn Crispell, India Cooke and so many others...

She has written extensively for dance and theater, and has staged a number of multidisciplinary performances. She got the DAAD at Berlin, is welcomed as artist resident at Villa Kujiyama (Kyoto). In 2002, 2004 and 2006, she is Visiting Professor at Mills college, Oakland, CA, Chaire Darius Milhaud, for improvisation and composition. Her work as a composer and a performer, both in solo recitals and a part of ensembles, has put her under the lights of the most prestigious stages of Europe, the Americas and Asia.



From 1981 to 2009, Joëlle Léandre has about 150 recordings to her credit.

Source: [www.joelle-leandre.com](http://www.joelle-leandre.com)

#### CAPACITY

10 participants

#### TICKETS

### IVA BITTOVÁ

#### DATE AND LOCATION

19 July 2014, 9:00-10:45am

Experimental Space NoD, Dlouhá 33, Prague 1

Teatro

#### DESCRIPTION

It doesn't matter if the voice has this colour or timbre or if it doesn't sound well. We have to enjoy ourselves to be able to sing or to play. This is perhaps the beginning of improvisation--of learning how to play with ourselves.

- Iva Bittová, from a segment of her interview with the Agosto Foundation, entitled *On Teaching Improvisation*.

#### CAPACITY

20 participants





TICKETS

## PAULINE OLIVEROS: DEEP LISTENING WORKSHOP

DATE AND LOCATION



19 July 2014, 10:45-12:00noon

Experimental Space NoD, Dlouha 33, Prague 1

Teatro

#### DESCRIPTION

Deep Listening Workshops include an Introduction to Deep Listening® with history, theory and practice. Practices include energy exercises, listening exercises and movement exercises as outlined in Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice by Pauline Oliveros, iUniverse, 2005.

Processes and the experience of the practices are discussed during the workshops with partners or small groups as well as with the group as a whole. Sonic Meditations. Text Scores and Deep Listening Pieces by Pauline Oliveros as well as scores by certificate holders and other composers of participatory pieces may be performed and discussed.

Workshops are intended for ear-minded people and attendees may be musicians or non-musicians.

#### DRESS

Participants should wear comfortable clothing.

#### CAPACITY

30 participants

#### TICKETS

### MARKUS POPP WORKSHOP

#### DATE AND LOCATION

19 July 2014, 15:00-17:30

Experimental Space NoD, Dlouha 33,  
Prague 1

Video NoD



#### DESCRIPTION

"Oval - Full Circle"

From deconstruction to reconstruction and back again. A round-trip report.

Electronic music productivity truly has come a long way: what once was an elitist, arcane science can now conveniently rely on a powerful arsenal of affordable and well-designed virtual studios, gadgets and sandboxes. Making music today is like sharing a global, universal hobby with almost no limitations, no door policy or entry requirements. Everything is right there at your fingertips: creative tools on every level for every user, on any scale. Universal availability plus know-how plus the implosion of all evaluation criteria seem to equal "infinite possibilities" these days. Or does it?

All these fundamental transitions bear a common signature: desktop revolution. Music evolves in step with its' virtualization, powered by a genuinely new acceleration factor: software – altering music faster, more dynamically and far-reaching than any traditional

musical evolution thus far. And haven't we just been launched into the next era? Into a hyper-real age of music productivity, where the digital emulation of instruments (acoustic and electric, traditional and futuristic) has outclassed the "real thing" - at least in key areas?

#### TICKETS

### INTERDISCIPLINARY PANEL

#### P E T R V R B A

His unrelenting explorations of non-idiomatic improvisation using trumpets, clarinet, vibrating speakers, egg cutters etc., made him one of the most active experimental musicians in Prague these days. His most intensive collaboration arose from meeting with American musician/composer George Cremaschi (doublebass, electronics) with whom they established Prague Improvisation Orchestra, Los Amargados duo, an international dance-visual-music project Arthuor etc. In 2013 they released "Villa K" album and 2014 "Los Amargados with Susanna Gartmayer", limited MC with comics.

In 2010 Petr became one of the founding members of improvisation ensemble IQ+1 which released in 2011 highly acclaimed CD "tvář v tvář" and in 2013 IQ+1 (released by Polís), album which was nominated for Czech Vinyla Prize 2013. In 2011 he constituted Yanagi duo with Korean experimenter Ryu Hankil (alarm clock, typewriters). A year later they released their first album "clinamen" waiting for its second album to be released in Korea.

This year (2014) there are at least three new albums going to be released: "Precise Party" of a quartet which beside him includes Isabelle Duthoit, Franz Hautzinger and Matija Schellander; Cracks & Joints (Czech-Slovakian quartet) and Roxie Lulu (an experimental trio from Prague).

During past years he started and still continues many projects: Criticón duo (with Tomáš Gris), Doppeltrio (with Maja Osojnik and Matija Schellander), Junk & the Beast (with Veronika Mayer), 2 horses too many (with Patrik Pelikán), Škvíry & Spoje/Cracks & Joints (with Dalibor Kocián, Josef Krupa and Michal Matějka), audiovisual trio Total Verquert (with SeEun Lee and Ken Ganfield) etc.

Among others Petr has recorded or played with musicians like Xavier Charles, Isabelle Duthoit, Kai Fagaschinski, Franz Hautzinger, Chris Heenan, Susanna Gartmayer, Matthew Goodheart, Irene Kepl, dd Kern, Christof Kurzmann, Ava Mendoza, Seijiro Murayama, Ivan Palacký, Matija Schellander, Ingrid Schmoliner, Jaroslav Šťastný (aka Peter Graham), Miro Tóth etc. Since 2010 he curates the musical programme of Communication Space Školská 28 which is a multifunctional space for various nonprofit cultural and artistic activities. Since 1994 he plays as a DJ at Radio 1 in Prague (last years include the programme 13 raw), and was also a temporary student of gamelan music at Institute of Art of Indonesia in Yogyakarta (1997–1998).

#### I V A N P A L A C K Ý

Based in Brno, Czech Republic, Ivan Palacký is a musician and architect. In the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s he played with various groups and took part in several music projects. At the end of the 1990s he founded the guitar/double bass/bassoon group Slede, zive slede (Herring, live herring) and since 2003 he has performed in an audiovisual duo called Koberce, zaclony/Carpets, Curtain (with VJ Vera Lukaskova). He "writes" a sound diary of his journeys collecting excerpts of stories, weird sounds and various acoustic mistakes. He likes to take part in one-shot improvisational groups or duos (such as with Cremaster (E), Ruth Barbarán (E) and Margarida Garcia (P), Will Guthrie (AUS), Andrea Neumann (D), Klaus Filip (A), Angharad Davies (GB), Steve Beresford (GB), Toshimaru Nakamura (JAP) and Tetuzi Akiyama (JAP) among others), as well as playing solo

performances. Since 2005 his main interest has been to dig out sounds from an amplified 1970s Dopleta knitting machine.

#### PAVEL KLUSÁK

Music publicist focusing on contemporary independent rock as well as non-artificial rock. His articles are based on thorough knowledge of modern European and American music and excel in their fresh language. Pavel Klusák has led interviews with Peter Gabriel, John Cale, Laurie Anderson, Mike Patton, Matthew Herbert and other musical personalities and groups. He was editor of the magazine *Týden*, from which he left in February of 2007 to work for the weekly magazine *Respekt*, where he was employed until April 2009; since Fall of 2009 he writes a column for the innovative Saturday supplement *Orientace of Lidové noviny*. Besides print publications (including *Hospodářské noviny*, *A2 kulturní týdeník*, *HIS Voice* etc.) he collaborates with Czech Radio, contributes to the selection of films about music for the International Film Festival of Karlovy Vary and organizes radio programs.

#### ZDENĚK KONOPÁSEK

As an academic sociologist, Zdeněk Konopásek is interested in ambiguous and complex relationships between science, technology and politics. He has written about communist power and auto/biographies (both as sociological data and as subject of study). Years ago, he was involved in a study of social policy and of welfare state institutions. He does not work with questionnaires and statistical data; rather, he relies on so called qualitative data – documents, personal accounts, life narratives, observations, etc. Too “big” and abstract sociological questions seem suspicious to him. He prefers detailed investigations of particular cases, controversies or situations, approached from multiple participants’ perspectives (this is not subjectivism, but rather a kind of meticulous realism).

Besides sociology, he enjoys making and listening to music.

#### TOMÁŠ RULLER

Tomas Ruller studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. His previous performances dealt with his direct experience of political repression and censorship i.e. being sued for performing, being prevented from performing at Documenta 8 in Kassel by the Czechoslovak authorities and having his passport confiscated.

Ruller co-founded the European international performance movements "School of Attention / East - West Study Project" 1983-1986 and "Black Market" 1986-1990. He was also active in resistance and the artists' political campaign against the "status quo" in the "parallel culture" networks: "Open Dialogue" and later in "Civic Forum", which have become the symbols of democratic transformation and European East - West integration.

Since 1989 he has exhibited and performed in many European countries, Israel, Canada, Japan, the USA (including New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco), his work has been published in the magazines *Artforum*, *Art & Design* (Performance Art in the 90's), *High Performance*, *Performance*, *Inter*, and he has appeared in the books *Performance Since 1960*, *Performance - Ritual - Process*.

Since 1992 he has been the head of the Video-Multimedia-Performance Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Technology in Brno, where he was appointed Dean in 1998.

Ruller aims to create an alternative way of thinking, by continually confronting the systemization of art and life. Some of Ruller's lengthier performances follow an elaborate script, combining elements of traditional mythologies with the contemporary experience of social deterioration. In his work, Ruller uses photographs, video and other media to enrich his visual language, creating a fragile and meditative ambience counterpointed with moments of peril and warning, often presented with humour.

#### EWAN MCLAREN

Currently artistic director of the Alfred ve dvoře Theatre, Ewan McLaren is a live arts curator, producer and director. Originally from Calgary, Canada, Ewan has contributed to developing the Czech independent live arts scene. Following eight years as a freelance director in many

different Prague repertory theatres, Ewan worked as apprentice producer with Daniel MacIvor's dada kamera company in Toronto and the One Yellow Rabbit company in Calgary and produced Calgary's High Performance Rodeo Festival of Innovative Performance for two years.

He has produced and co-organized many independent performance projects and events in Prague, ranging from work for the Prague Quadrennial and Tanec Praha to Motus, producers of the Alfred ve dvoře Theatre. With Miroslav Bambušek he is co-creator of the Energy Pathways cycle of site-specific works on the history of Central Europeans working with energy resources, including Miner's Day (Zdař Bůh!) at the Michal Mine in Ostrava (2009), for which he and co-director Bambušek received the Czech Theatre News Award.



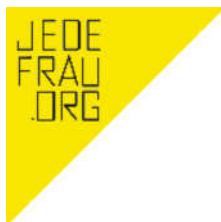


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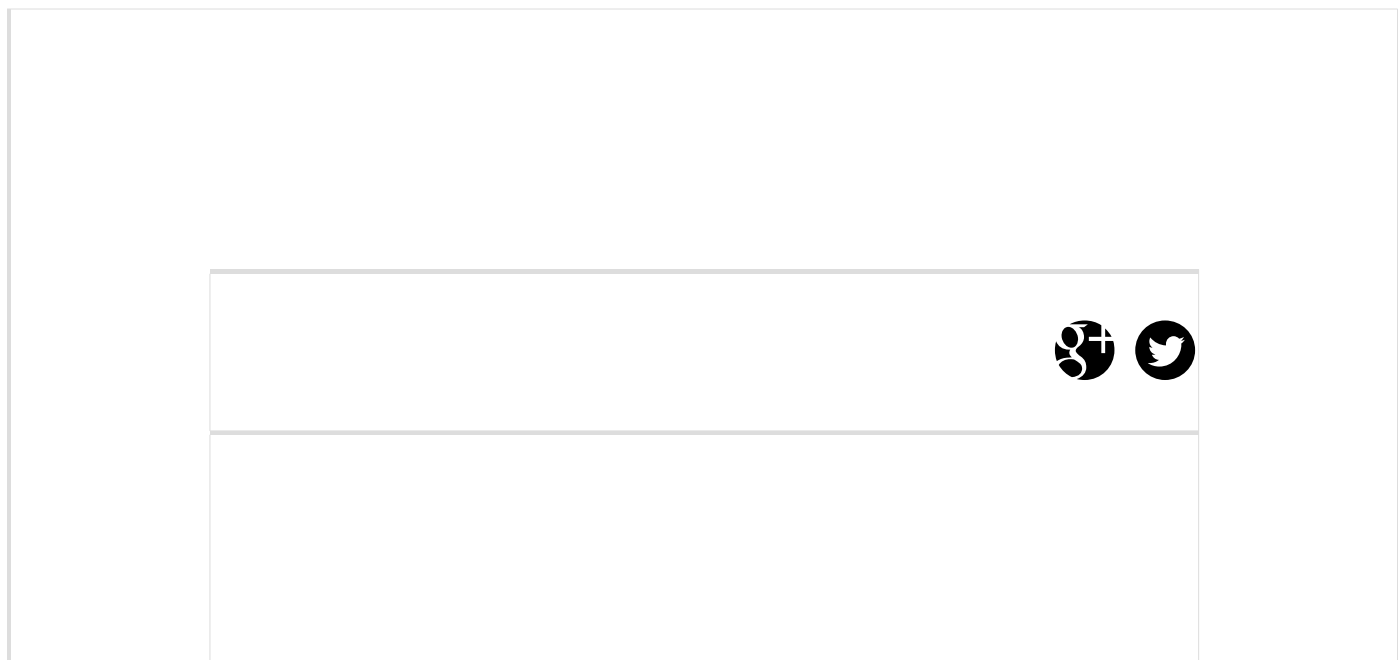
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The division of Critical Studies and Experimental Practices of the Music Department at the University of California, San Diego is pleased to announce

## improvising across borders:

### An inter-disciplinary symposium on improvised music

April 9-11, 1999, Mandeville Center, University of California, San Diego

Musicians and scholars from diverse disciplines will gather in San Diego for this unique symposium on improvised music. The weekend will include presentations of scholarly work, panel discussions, two concerts, and many guest artists and scholars, including:

- **Keynote guest, Pauline Oliveros**

- Susan Allen
- David Antin
- Eleanor Antin
- Douglas Ewart
- Ed Harkins
- Thomas Allen Harris
- George Lewis
- Ingrid Monson
- James Newton
- J.D. Parran
- Edwin Prévost
- Benetta Jules-Rosette
- Kartik Seshadri
- LaDonna Smith
- Catherine Sullivan
- Michaka Uba

Borgo  
Hebe  
Nun  
Sarah  
Stacy

## Context

Over the last few decades, the term "improvised music" has come to refer to a field encompassing many contemporary artists who make improvisation a central element in their music-making and who often form their own individual stance by drawing on a multiplicity of styles, techniques, processes and aesthetic attitudes, rather than locating themselves within a singular musical tradition. There is a growing body of scholarship on this emerging field, and this symposium was organized in large part to provide a much-needed outlet for such work, a formal space where scholars and artists could meet to exchange ideas.

We also felt that given the inherently diverse and perhaps even transcultural nature of contemporary improvisational practice, it was imperative that our symposium take an interdisciplinary stance, inviting requests from artists and scholars in not only music but other fields as well. As a result, the scholars who will present papers represent not only the disciplines of contemporary music scholarship, but also other fields such as cultural studies, political science, philosophy or aesthetics. In addition, we have invited a number of special guests to participate in panel discussions and to perform on the two concerts.

There is no registration fee for the symposium, and the paper and panel sessions are free and open to the public.

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We would like to thank the following for their generous support for this symposium: the Music Department of UCSD; the division of Critical Studies and Experimental Practices; the Contemporary Black Arts Program; Bonnie Wright and the Spruce St. Forum; and the Graduate Association of UCSD.

Improvising across borders planning committee: Dana Reason, Sean Griffin, Jason Robinson, Michael Dessen, and George Lewis.

## improvising across borders:

An inter-disciplinary symposium on improvised music

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Following is a partial list of the papers which will be presented on Saturday, April 10, 1999; Click on a title to read the abstract.

- [Roman Ingarden and the Ontology of Improvised Music](#) (Douglas Al-Maini)
- [The Art of Juggling and Thinking about the Laundry: Evan Parker, Embodiment, and Enactive Cognition](#) (David Borgo)
- [Out of the mouths of babes: youth, sound art practices, and the aesthetics of "tablecore"](#) (Bob Boster)
- [Momentary Power Constitution and Socio-Political Structures Within Collaborative Improvisation](#) (Andrew J. Bucksbarg)
- ["Thinkin' one thing and doin' another": polystylistic elements in 70s Miles](#) (Anthony Burr)
- [The evolving relationship between improvisation and technology-based music](#) (Harry Castle)
- [The Cecil Taylor Orchestra at the 1995 San Francisco Jazz Festival](#) (Matthew Goodheart)
- [Thinking jazz, theorizing citizenship: an interpretive exploration of what it means to be American](#) (Sarita McCoy Gregory)
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- [Performing Identity: Jazz Autobiography and the Politics of Literary Improvisation](#) (Ajay Heble)
- [African-American Improvised Musics and Embodied Cognition](#) (Vijay Iyer)
- [Improvisation: an always-accessible instrument of innovation](#) (Beate Kutschke)
- [A Chromodal Model for Improvisation Studies](#) (Hafez Modirzadeh)
- [The Cool War: Jazz, the State Department and Africa](#) (Ingrid Monson)
- [Theoretical Considerations in Free Improvisation](#) (Tom Nunn)
- [The St. Louis Black Artist Group {BAG}: Improvisation in an Unbroken Continuum](#) (J.D. Parran)
- ["Life can never be too disorienting" \(Guy Debord\): tracing the situationists as radical lifestyle improvisers, with suggested applications for music improvisers.](#) (Mary Lee A. Roberts)
- [Guided Improvisation: An Examination of Four Realizations of the Javanese Gamelan Piece "Onang-onang."](#) (Christina Roland)
- [Improvisation, Time and Consciousness](#) (Ed Sarath)
- [Improvisation Beyond the Baroque: A Case of Historical Amnesia](#) (Angeles Sancho-Velázquez)
- [From "The Moment As Teacher" \(excerpt\)](#) (LaDonna Smith)
- [Articulating Intercultural Free Improvisation](#) (Jason Stanyek)
- [The Creative Music Studio: A Unique Cross-Cultural Community of Improvisers, Product of a Unique Time and Place](#) (Bob Sweet)
- [Blind Data: Improvising Across Boundaries in Cuba](#) (W. Andrew Schloss)
- [I Nyoman Wenten's Merapi: Investigating Cultural Boundedness Through Improvisation](#) (Ann Warde)

- The Doina (Robert Zelickman)

## **Roman Ingarden and the Ontology of Improvised Music**

Douglas Al-Maini

The aesthetics of Polish philosopher Roman Ingarden stand at the forefront of the phenomenological movement's understanding of the experience and ontology of art. Ingarden devoted a substantial portion of his research in aesthetics to the work of music, particularly in regards to the problem of its identity. However, for subject matter, Ingarden limited himself to the use of traditional classical music, and hence allowed the improvised work of music to have little influence on his philosophy. As radical as the break between traditional or classical styles of music and newer, "free" or improvised music sometimes seems to be, it is my contention that Ingardens' broad conception of the work of music being a purely intentional object can serve as a basis for coming to grips with the ontology of improvised music. This paper is an attempt to do so.

Douglas Al-Maini is currently working on his doctoral studies with the Philosophy department at the University of Guelph, Canada where his main research studies focus on Ancient Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Contemporary Continental Philosophy. He studied jazz composition and performance for two years at Humber College in Toronto. In the past year he has been an organizer and staff member of the Guelph jazz festival, where he continues to try and spread the sound of improvised music.

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## **The Art of Juggling and Thinking about the Laundry: Evan Parker, Embodiment, and Enactive Cognition**

David Borgo

"My solo playing at the moment is about overtones and polyrhythms and using certain kinds of polyrhythmic fingering patterns in order to generate the illusion of polyphony. It's a bit like juggling . . . You have to do the easier tricks first: get into the rhythm and suddenly your body is able to do things which you couldn't do cold. The best bits of my solo playing, for me, I can't explain to myself." Evan Parker quoted in Lock (1991:33)

"When the music's really going you switch from left-brain activity to right-brain activity--and once you've made that switch the left brain can think about more or less anything it wants. The laundry, anything." Evan Parker quoted in Lock (1991:32)

This paper is part of a larger project investigating the contemporary cultural shift that has authorized new dynamical visions of order and disorder in the sciences and the arts. It investigates current theories of embodiment and metaphor (Mark Johnson 1987) and enactive cognition (Francisco Varela et al. 1991) along with their application to musical studies (Robert Walser 1991) as a possible means to an understanding of the solo saxophone performance practice of Evan Parker. A description of the extended techniques employed by Mr. Parker, selected exemplary recorded excerpts, and personal quotes compiled from several published interviews help to ground and contextualize the more theoretical goals of the project.

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David Borgo is a jazz saxophonist, educator, and ethnomusicologist. He holds a B.M. degree from Indiana University and has performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. He is currently a candidate for the Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology at U.C.L.A., teaches jazz history and world music courses for the U.C. and California State University systems, and works regularly as a freelance musician in Los Angeles.

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## **Out of the mouths of babes: youth, sound art practices, and the aesthetics of "tablecore"**

Bob Boster <http://www.detritus.net/meridies/>

"Tablecore" from table: a surface used for setting up equipment and core: alluding to "hardcore" - a subset of punk rock made in opposition to the mainstream music industry. Tablecore: the title for a musical practice delineated by use of electronics in a focal role, by non-professional practitioners, where the outcome focuses on "sound" as opposed to "musical structure". Can include amateur production of the following genres: "dance music", "noise", "electro-acoustic composition", or "ambient". The styles may shift, but the mode of production remains consistent: an individual or group assembles a hodgepodge and sometimes home-made collection of sound-making devices and starts to experiment with the outcome of their interaction. Because of a combination of factors - non-standard instrumentation, idiosyncratic practice, absence of formal training, and use of previously constructed sound elements - a kind of improvisatory experimentation is at the heart of the process. While this kind of practice exists in many settings, it is thriving amongst a youthful, underground music community.

This paper intends to draw on the work of Attali and de Certeau to discuss how an aesthetic practice like tablecore functions in opposition to the monolithic consumer culture through a variety of mechanisms, especially improvisation and acceptance of "noise" as art. The presentation will include audio examples and material derived from interviews with youthful practitioners, assuming that they represent a more pure sample group, as well as representing a cultural frontier of sorts which offers us all some reason for hope.

Bob Boster is a composer, performer, and multi-media artist from the SF Bay Area. Previously based in Chapel Hill, NC - where Bob ran the award-winning radio station WXYC and founded the independent record label, Friction Media - Bob moved west to attend Mills College in 1995 and has studied with Chris Brown, Alvin Curran, Maggi Payne, Christian Wolff, Fred Frith, and Pauline Oliveros. Ongoing interests include live electronics, aleatory and graphical composition, performance art, improvisational traditions, desk-top audio, and traditional processing-art. Bob often performs under the pseudonym Mr. Meridies, who presents appropriative sound collage in an "underground music" context. Bob and/or Mr. Meridies has

performed around the country and offered recordings on Friction Media, Illegal Art/Seeland, and Cultural Labyrinth. Bob's writing has appeared in the South African journal Media Resource Centre Working Paper, in the new media journal Chain, and in the independent publications Stay Free and Tuba Frenzy. More details can be found at <http://www.detritus.net/meridies/>

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## **Momentary Power Constitution and Socio-Political Structures Within Collaborative Improvisation**

Andrew J. Bucksbarg

Improvised forms offer varying degrees of choices for how a momentary practice unfolds. The indeterminate choices of the composite individuals within the improvisatory action of a group can provide alternate possibilities than prewritten, directed or scored experiences. One possibility rests within the uncertainty of the political structure. As the scholar Claude Lefort writes, "The important point is that democracy is instituted and sustained by the dissolution of the markers of certainty. It inaugurates a history in which people experience a fundamental indeterminacy as to the basis of power, law and knowledge, and as to the basis of relations between self and other." This is the indeterminacy of the governing power as it passes and permeates a collaborative group engaged in an improvised practice. This is the uncertainty of the relationships of self and other, of self and group, of collaborator and group, regarding authorship, leadership within the improvised action and the social dynamic. I intend to investigate the embodiment of the socio-political moment within a collaborative, improvised action. I will look at the momentary process of how power is constituted within a collaborative group. By slowing down the improvised moment, I will trace how power is constituted through group improvised actions and pose these questions. How can the organizing powers in improvisation be indeterminate? How can improvisation serve as a democratizing means within a social space? Improvisation is often ripe with uncertainty, how can this uncertainty function to democratize these spaces? The paper will explore the improvisation techniques of groups through the perspective of recent collaborative practice within experimental music, the momentary strategy of the "consciousness raising" of 70's feminism, the political process of Quakers and recent writings on democracy to generate perspective on collaborative or group improvisation. The intent of the paper will be twofold, to investigate the organizing, governing structure of recent improvising groups and to offer new possibilities and perspectives for these contexts.

Andrew J. Bucksbarg is an experimental media artist, sound artist, performer in Los Angeles. His recent work includes collaborative installations with artist Jennifer Steinkamp for the Public Works show at The Santa Monica Museum in L.A. and the Ultra Lounge show at Diverse Works Art Space in Houston. Bucksbarg has performed and collaborated with the Digital Improvisation Ensemble at California Institute of the Arts, also solo performances at the Koos Arts Cafe, Huntington Beach Art Center and was curator for Sound: Performance for Live Electronics at CalArts. His poem Birthsong recently appeared in Small Pond Magazine and his sound piece Autonomic was included on the recent Frog Peak Collaborations Project compact disc. Future performances include the upcoming Santa Fe International Festival of Electro-Acoustic Music. Bucksbarg studied music and writing at Indiana University where he received a Bachelor's of Science degree. He is a candidate for a Masters in Fine Art in Integrated Media/New Media at CalArts. His recent interests include recontextualizing performance and the performance space, the performative nature and function of momentary social/group structures, as well as alternative interfaces for electronic instruments in performance, and performative objects and installations.

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**"Thinkin' one thing and doin' another": polystylistic elements in 70s Miles**

Anthony Burr

Once critically disdained, Miles Davis' recordings from the 1970s have recently been rehabilitated as a kind of Rosetta Stone for welding disparate cultural styles into a workable whole. My aim in this overview paper is to engage in some rather prosaic material analysis of the music in an attempt to find some clues as to how he pulled it off and to outline my suspicion that the music's success lay not so much in the embrace of a more diverse palette (he'd always done this) but in a firmer grounding in the blues and a more African approach to rhythmic structure (especially in the use of polymeter and repetition). This can be considered in light of Davis' self-conscious, if notably unsuccessful, quest for a young black audience.

My contention is that by developing a more African rhythmic practice, Miles needed to change the temporal orientation of the large scale structure. A useful model in this respect was Stockhausen's theories about moment form, which Miles had become aware of at this time. This reliance on repetition also problematized more European notions of harmony that had underpinned Davis' jazz output up till then. Further, in foregrounding ensemble playing, a radically different approach to improvisation was required from his sidemen: one that drew on earlier jazz, free jazz (especially Ornette), Indian music, funk and rock music. Finally I will examine the impact of technology on the creation of these records: how Miles moved from the representational/documentary model of recording favored in improvised music to a model that allowed both technological expansion of the palette, and an in-built awareness of the medium and its relationship with the improviser.

Anthony Burr has performed across most genres of contemporary music as a freelance clarinetist with groups including the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Klangforum Wien, STX-Xenakis Ensemble and Elision; has worked with major composers including Helmut Lachenmann and Brian Ferneyhough; and has worked extensively as an improviser with artists including Jim O'Rourke, Evan Parker, George Lewis, Chris Speed, Pat Zimmerli and Australian violinist/composer John Rodgers. A CD of electroacoustic music created in collaboration with Skuli Sverrisson was recently released. He is a doctoral student at UCSD.

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**The evolving relationship between improvisation and technology-based music**

Harry Castle, University of California, San Diego

The growth and evolution of technology-based musics is inextricably intertwined with developments in the technologies that make them possible. Each new technological development is packaged as hardware or software in a way that suggests a particular set of uses, and the design decisions that define the packaging will encourage the use of the techniques to which they provide the greatest and easiest access. The marketplace is generally less interested in gaining access to the complex internal configuration of a synthesizer, than in having a product that will deliver results right out of the box. The rise of computer workstations and the advent of MIDI have brought with them big changes in the way studios look and are operated, provoking a shift away from a more hands-on, performative approach to studio work, towards a more compositional/workstation approach of successive refinement. These developments

have had a profound effect on the relationship between improvisation and technology-based music, particularly as they exist in academic institutions.

This paper examines ways in which a previously requisite degree of experimentalism was quietly lost as the rough edges were progressively designed out of the equipment, and the subsequent effect this has had toward discouraging and de-legitimizing improvisation as a natural and appropriate approach to producing music using available technologies.

Harry Castle received an A.B (Physics) from Cornell University, and an M.S. (Computer Science) and M.M (Electronic Music) from Northern Illinois University. He is an experienced improviser and has worked extensively with technology for live performance and installation works. He has performed in multi-media political theater works with pianist Joseph Pinzarrone, jazz composer/percussionist Damon Short, and others in a variety of locales including Chicago, New York, Toronto, Greece, and Japan. He has recently performed with George Lewis at the California Institute for the Arts, and is currently studying with George Lewis and Miller Puckette at the University of California at San Diego, where he is working towards a Ph.D in Critical Studies and Experimental Practices.

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## **The Cecil Taylor Orchestra at the 1995 San Francisco Jazz Festival**

Matthew Goodheart

In 1995 Cecil Taylor organized a group of 42 musicians, including myself, to perform his compositions at the San Francisco Jazz Festival. We were given a set of scores, written in Taylor's idiomatic style, and the pieces were rehearsed for a week prior to the concert. However, the performance took quite a different turn than the rehearsals had, and often the scores were abandoned to free group and individual improvisational contexts. This paper examines two particular moments where the scores were abandoned, plotting in detail how they manifested themselves. What emerges from this examination is how the group struggled between three shifting identities; an orchestra performing compositions; a free-improvising ensemble; and a collection of individuals who alternately perform as "soloists," reminiscent of traditional jazz structures. An analysis of how Taylor himself responds to the musical environment shows how he encourages this constant shift; indeed that is the true nature of Taylor's musical conception. Reaction of several performers demonstrate varying conceptions of what these shifts meant, and how they were viewed, especially by several women participants, as gendered expression. The possibility of Taylor's musical conception as a form of male discourse is examined. Finally, we see that what was created was not only an orchestra, but actual musical society which, like all societies, constantly redefined itself according to the actions of its members.

A native of the San Francisco Bay Area, composer, improviser, and pianist Matthew Goodheart's is a graduate of Mills College and a faculty member of the East Bay Center for Performing Arts. He has performed the works of John Cage, Morton Feldman, Maggie Payne, Terry Riley, Pauline Oliveros and Carla Bley. In addition, he has performed with Roscoe Mitchell, Christian Wolff, Wawada Leo Smith, Cecil Taylor, Bertram Turetzky, Rashid Bakr, Chris Brown, Marco Eneidi, Gianni Gebbia, Lisle Ellis, George Lewis, Dominic Duval, and Larry Ochs. In addition to performing frequently in the SF Bay Area, he recently appeared at 20th-Century Forum's CHAPEL OF THE CHIMES and at the FIRE IN THE VALLEY FESTIVAL in Amherst, Mass.

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**Thinking jazz, theorizing citizenship: an interpretive exploration of what it means to be American**

Sarita McCoy Gregory, Department of Political Science, University of Chicago

Contemporary theories of American politics often emphasize conventional ways that individual American citizens are expected to participate in the polity: through military service, voting, and voluntary activism. This essay will critically reassess the meaning of citizenship in the United States to account for the anomaly of slavery and the denial of citizenship to Blacks by exploring the political consequences of an unlikely source--expressive culture. Namely, I consider the political consequences of expressive culture as a mode of articulating a desire for citizenship and as a language for expanding current conceptions of citizenship.

This essay will employ a different interpretive frame to the age-old question, 'what does it mean to be American.' Jazz, I argue, is a useful aesthetic ideal because it allows one to begin thinking nonlinearly about conventional modes of political participation. Thinking nonlinearly allows one to theorize citizenship as improvisation, a metaphor for "more flexible social thinking" which seeks to find coherence among the many contradictions of American citizenship. Conceived this way, citizenship can communicate a desire to be recognized as a part of the broader community and express a dissatisfaction with the state of society. Improvisation is characteristically used to describe African American creativity--from dance and music to literature and language. Why, then, should it not inform their perspective of and approach to politics and to becoming American citizens?

Sarita McCoy Gregory is currently an advanced graduate student in the department of Political Science at the University of Chicago. Her main areas of concentration are American politics, Race and Culture, and Critical Political Theory. Her doctoral thesis, entitled "Expressive Culture and the Meaning of Citizenship," explores issues of race, jazz improvisation, and changing conceptions of citizenship for African Americans. She is currently a research assistant with the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture, where she is organizing a conference and concert featuring women jazz improvisers (Fall 1999).

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**Juggling at the edges: the improvising conductor/composer and the postmodern exploratory jazz orchestra**

Dr. Mark S. Harvey, MIT Music and Theater Arts

I am a composer who creates large-scale structures while using conducted improvisation along with individual and collective improvisation, to realize the "work" in the moment of performance. With my Aardvark Jazz Orchestra, a wide spectrum of exploratory jazz and New Music, as well as vernacular and world musics, serve as inspiration and source material for original process-oriented conceptions.

As composer-conductor [and instrumental improviser], my long experience juggling at the edges of these various border crossings will serve as the basis for this paper. I will explore some paradoxes and challenges encountered and trace out some implications for aesthetics and cultural analysis, using audio and video illustrations as feasible.

Paradoxes and challenges encountered include: balancing and blending composed elements with spontaneous occurrences; shaping such interplay within an evolving overall design; and the negotiation of issues related to intention, control, and freedom. Implications may be framed as sets of questions pertaining to: the authorship, identity and replicability of a "work;" the nature of composition, improvisation, and spontaneity; conventions associated with musical traditions and role-functions.

My conclusion will be that such activity and the questions raised by it challenge, and perhaps threaten, the prevailing mindset in jazz as well as in music of all kinds. Juggling at the edges, in fact, provide a viable strategy to cross borders and erase boundaries at century's end.

Dr. Mark S. Harvey is a composer, performer, bandleader and teaches jazz studies at MIT. His Aardvark Jazz Orchestra plays across the spectrum of jazz, improvised music and New Music and has recorded four CDs on the Nine Winds and Leo Lab labels. He has performed throughout the Northeast, in California, Mexico and Germany and played with George Russell, Sheila Jordan, Jimmy Giuffre, Jaki Byard, Vinny Golia, Ken Filiano, Walter Thompson, and Tom Plsek among others. His essays on jazz and on music, religion, and culture have appeared in various journals and anthologies.

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## **Performing Identity: Jazz Autobiography and the Politics of Literary Improvisation**

Ajay Heble, School of Literatures and Performance Studies in English, University of Guelph

For this paper I'd like to turn to one variant of what Krin Gabbard calls jazz's "other history" to look at how three well-known jazz autobiographies--Charles Mingus' *Beneath the Underdog*, Duke Ellington's *Music is My Mistress*, and Billie Holiday's *Lady Sings the Blues*--use performance-oriented models of improvisation to engage complex questions of agency and identity. If, as Henry Louis Gates Jr. argues, "the will to power for black Americans was the will to write; and the predominant mode that this writing would assume was the shaping of a black self in words" (4), then these three jazz autobiographies clearly need to be read in the context of what one critic calls autobiography's "democratic potential" (Folkenflik 23), that is, its ability to enable oppressed groups to achieve access to self-representation and control over the processes of literary production. As Christopher Harlos notes, "for jazz musicians, the turn to autobiography is regarded as a genuine opportunity to seize narrative authority" (134). My interest here is in showing that while the authority attached to such authenticating narratives has, perhaps by necessity, an important role to play in facilitating our understanding of autobiography's democratizing effects, of our tendency to see the genre as offering "the most direct and accessible way of countering silence and misrepresentation" (Swindells 7), the identities fashioned in these particular texts compel us to ask hard methodological questions about the mediated nature of these self-representational acts: how are we to assess the role that (white) literary institutions have played in shaping these particular black identities? is autobiographical identity best understood as a function of referentiality? of textuality? of social construction? (see Folkenflik 12) or, indeed, as a rhetorically compelling effect of performance and improvisation? In what ways, this paper will ask, do these jazz autobiographies enable us to measure the political efficacy of improvised traditions in narrative?

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Ajay Heble is an Associate Professor in the School of Literatures and Performance Studies in English at the University of Guelph. He has published widely on cultural theory and postcolonialism, and his book, *The Poetics of Jazz: Music, Language, and the Politics of Cultural Representation* is forthcoming from Routledge. He is also the founder and Artistic Director of The Guelph Jazz Festival.

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## African-American Improvised Musics and Embodied Cognition

Vijay Iyer (Ph.D., [Center for New Music & Audio Technologies, U.C. Berkeley](#))

Music provides an especially interesting laboratory for the study of cognition. Because so much musical behavior is non-linguistic in nature, music tends to challenge dominant rationalist/linguistic paradigms for cognition. Much of this can be attributed to the role of the body and physical movement in the act of music-making. It has proven useful to study the role of the body in cognition in general, as well as in a particular range of rhythm-based African and African-American musics, to develop an enlarged view of music perception and cognition that incorporates the body, temporality, and culture.

The theory of embodied cognition, which has emerged in the cognitive-science community over the last decade, encompasses both neuropsychological and socioenvironmental views of cognition. Embodied cognition stresses physical and temporal situatedness, and enforces interaction between the agent's body and its environment. Cognition is seen to be inextricably intertwined with bodily experience in the physical world, as well as with interpersonal experience in the cultural world; cognition is not treated merely as abstract, disembodied computation, but as concrete, embodied activity.

Such a holistic, broad view of cognition fits in well with contemporary accounts of musical improvisation. Drawing upon concepts and recorded excerpts from various African and African-American musics, I stress that improvisation may be viewed in part as the interaction of various formal, conceptual, cultural, situational, and embodied dimensions. In doing so, I sketch a perspective on embodied musical cognition.

VIJAY IYER earned a Ph.D. at U.C. Berkeley in December 1998 in a self-styled interdisciplinary program in Technology and the Arts. His thesis work addressed issues in music perception and cognition, African-American musics, and embodiment. But primarily, Iyer is a pianist, composer, and bandleader based in New York City. He has released two compact discs, "Memorophilia" (1995) and "Architextures" (1998), both on Asian Improv Records. Iyer collaborates frequently with saxophonist Steve Coleman and with the hip-hop group Midnight Voices. He has also performed with Cecil Taylor, George Lewis, John Tchicai, ROVA Saxophone Quartet, Miya Masaoka, and Amiri Baraka.

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## Improvisation: an always-accessible instrument of innovation

*Wolfgang Iyer*

Beate Kutschke

The paper focuses on improvisation in avantgarde music in the United States (John Cage and his circle) and Germany (Karlheinz Stockhausen and Dieter Schnebel). It clarifies the cultural background of improvisation with the purpose of revealing its implications with respect to modern rationality and domination.

Composers defined the purposes of their improvisation methods as overcoming the dominating rationality in composition (like the serialism) through experimentation (Cage, Stockhausen), the stimulation of free personal development (Schnebel), new musical inventions (Stockhausen) and new ways of communicative behavior (Christian Wolff) during performance. These concepts fitted into the antirational, progress-critical new social movement of the seventies.

Examining the categories of improvisation in their contemporary political, scientific and economical context, reveals them not as overcoming but as prolonging rational procedures by utilizing creativity for new compositional methods. The idea to instrumentalize creativity contradicted the common opinion that creativity was a fortunate gift from god or marks of genius.

*das ist keine feste Idee  
für improvisation*

This new idea must have been influenced by the latest psychological research: In the fifties, set against the scientific and military competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, Joy Paul Guilford determined creativity to be an operationable part of intelligence. Guilford's idea was used not only in musical pedagogy but also in economic management training programs.

Similar to this, avantgarde music used Guilford's scientific shaping of creativity. During improvised performances it became an always-accessible instrument of innovation (according to Stockhausen's utterances for instance) - just in a situation of music history when composers felt a need for new compositional impulses.

Beate Kutschke studied musicology and art history at Freie Universität and Technische Universität Berlin. In 1993 she completed her masters thesis entitled "Intolleranza 1960 of Luigi Nono". Beate Kutschke is a doctoral candidate in the department of cultural studies at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, working on her doctoral thesis about the end of history and late 20th century avantgarde music. She published two articles in 1996 in Diskurse zur gegenwärtigen Musikkultur and in Weimarer Beiträge, Heft 4, called "Posthistoire und dessen Bedeutung für die Musik" and "Nonos Intolleranza 1960" respectively. Together with Stefan Fagner and Jan Hemming she is coeditor of the book "Gender Studies und Musik. Geschlechterrollen und ihre Bedeutung für die Musikwissenschaft" (Regensburg 1998).

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*Wolfgang Iyer*

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## **A Chromodal Model for Improvisation Studies**

Hafez Modirzadeh, San Francisco State Univeristy

"Chromodal" is an original term which signifies the "spectrum" or "range" of a particular "manner of being". The term functions as conceptual tool for integrating various creative forms of expression within one performance practice. As a descriptive model, it is based upon three interrelated perceptions: namely, as an improvised curve between quantifying and qualifying axes of gravity. This "chromodal" curve represents both life and art, or better, life as artistic expression, and is made up of those infinite designs that result from turning objective physical properties into subjective artistic works. At its most fundamental, this curve may either be molded by its inner axes (in which case composition comes to mind), or better, left to determine these axes by way of its own immediate expression (in which case improvisation takes priority!). Whether through art, dance, music, or poetry, the inclusive result of a chromodal context enshrouds what universal meanings may arise from interdisciplinary collaboration between all.

Hafez Modirzadeh is a saxophonist who practices an original concept he calls "chromodality", which initiates a performance context where various systems' structures are exchanged in creative cross-disciplinary dialogue. This work is the result of two NEA Jazz Fellowships, a doctoral dissertation for Wesleyan Univeristy, and several musical recordings on the subject. Having performed internationally, Modirzadeh is currently on faculty at San Francisco State Univeristy, where he teaches innovative jazz and world music practices.

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## **The Cool War: Jazz, the State Department and Africa**

Ingrid Monson, Washington University in St. Louis

In 1956 the State Department started sending jazz musicians abroad as part of its efforts to improve the image of the U.S. in the eyes of the newly emerging independent nations of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Fearful that the soon to be postcolonial nations would align with the Soviet Union, the State Dept. sought to improve the image of race relations in the U.S., by sending successful African American musicians abroad. Dizzy Gillespie was the first to travel, followed in later years by, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, and Randy Weston, among others. While Gillespie was touring the Middle East for the State Department, Louis Armstrong made his first trip to Africa (under private sponsorship) where he was greeted by the Gold Coast's Kwame Nkrumah (soon to be President of an independent Ghana) and played to crowds as large as 100,000. The trip had a profound impact on him. Armstrong returned to a U.S. in the midst of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and during the next major civil rights crisis (the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas) Armstrong surprised the jazz world by speaking out against federal government's inaction on desegregation, and threatening to withdraw from a planned State Department tour. This presentation tells the stories of Gillespie and Armstrong in 1956 and 1957, and in so doing places jazz in the context of the Cold War, and the domestic struggle for civil rights.

[Click here for a bio for Ingrid Monson](#)



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## **Theoretical Considerations in Free Improvisation**

Tom Nunn

Tom Nunn describes what he considers to be basic theoretical issues in free improvisation which he discusses in his book, *Wisdom of the Impulse*. The most fundamental elements of (influences upon) free improvisation are described as Context, Content and Perception. Context is Cultural, Physical, Biological and Personal. Content consists of various Processes. Perception is vital to the feedback loop by which new material is constantly being generated. Key characteristics are described as Meta-Style, Dissociative Flow/Dissociative Polyphony, and the principles of Simultaneity, Hybridization, Kinesis and Unpredictability, all of which challenge the listener. The fundamental Processes discussed are: linear functioning with contextualization and projection; identity; relational functioning/composites; transitions and resultant segmental form; and gestural continuity/integrity. A number of types and/or examples of each are discussed. It is noted that intentions are not always realized in group improvisations; adjustments must be made, and this is part of the interest the music holds. These theoretical issues - style, linear development, ensemble relationships, formal change and structural integrity - provide a basis for active, critical listening. And as the audience becomes more critical, the music becomes more sophisticated, more itself.

Tom Nunn, B.Mus., M.A. (composition) has studied free improvisation since a graduate student at UCSD in 1975, with a focus on experimental instruments, performing and recording with his space plates and electroacoustic percussion boards. His instruments utilize commonly available materials, amplification via contact microphones, and are often sculptural in appearance. He has performed in Europe and Canada, the West Coast and California, and has written several articles on his work (*Experimental Musical Instruments*; *Leonardo*; *Musicworks*), as well as a book on free improvisation, *Wisdom of the Impulse*.

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## **The St. Louis Black Artist Group {BAG}: Improvisation in an Unbroken Continuum**

J.D. Parran

From the late 1960's thru the early 1970's BAG, a grass roots artists collective, formed and flourished, then disappeared from it's urban community setting. But for a few years, productive years, it nurtured and gave voice to the burning creative impetus at large in that city.

Some founders of BAG were musicians like Julius Hemphill and Oliver Lake who were embarking into new territory culturally and politically as well as artistically. Virtually all of it's musicians were in a venerable line of improvisers with wide ranging experience and skills.

The purpose of the paper is to discuss the music of this movement, it's background and influences from the perspective of a participant, J D Parran: What did we listen to, study and perform? What was it like to rehearse and teach at BAG? How do you react



personally to a creative environment that is Afrocentric, positioned as part of the next wave in jazz?

[Click here to see a bio for J.D. Parran](#)

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**"Life can never be too disorienting" (Guy Debord): tracing the situationists as radical lifestyle improvisers, with suggested applications for music improvisers.**

Mary Lee A. Roberts, Moorhead State University

The Situationists - a primarily located-in-Paris group, essentially active in the late 1950s and 1960s, offered suggestions designed for art-makers to help locate themselves in lifestyles designed to be based on total improvisation. Guy Debord, probably the most remembered and documented Situationist, dedicated his art (film making and writing) to propagandizing the importance of lifestyle improvisation - a life dedicated to creating situations for unexpected activity. This paper commences with a study of two improvisational activities developed by Debord:

- The Derive - "drifting ... a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances" - usually outlined as long periods of improvised activity including elements of: travel, dance, sound making, and writing. An example of a typical Situationist style Derive could be a day-long tour of a neighborhood in a city with an improvisationally derived map for guidance.

- The Detournement - a technique for improvising radical situations, used by Situationists mainly for propagandizing, where two or more art expressions (for example: a music expression and a print expression, or a film expression and a print expression) are synthesized into a radical configuration resulting in a music recording, film, book, or other artifact.

After establishing theoretical/historical grounds for Situationist activity this paper suggests activities for contemporary music improvisers using the Derive and Detournement as leaping-off-points. Theories of structured improvisation and free improvisation in both music making and lifestyle construction are compared. A discussion of possibilities for integrating a consciousness for music improvisation into our daily lives concludes the paper.

Mary Lee Roberts is co-editor along with Benjamin Boretz of the new print and on-line magazine, "The Open Space" which deals with writings on and about creative and experimental activities. Mary's recordings can be heard on the Open Space recording label. Currently Mary is teaching audio engineering, computer music, and music history at Moorhead State University in Minnesota.

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**Guided Improvisation: An Examination of Four Realizations of the Javanese Gamelan Piece "Onang-onang."**

[Christina Roland](#) University of California, San Diego

How do we draw the line between variation and improvisation? In this paper I explore this question using real time music making in Javanese gamelan performance practice as a case study. Ethnomusicologists frequently describe Javanese music as a formulaic system. Typically Javanese musicians describe a melodic vocabulary called *cengkok* from which they may construct their melodic elaborations. In a recent talk one musician told me that in the past, when the arts were flourishing in the courts, court musicians often improvised, however, today *cengkok* have become standardized. Yet another musician said that while more *cengkok* have become fixed, there is still room for improvisation--improvisation that is based upon a musician's mood at a given moment.

Drawing upon information gathered from interviews with Javanese musicians and transcriptions of Javanese music, I will investigate how Javanese musicians realize their individual parts. I will explore how Javanese logic affects real time music making with an examination of four realizations of a Javanese gamelan piece, "Onang-onang." With an understanding of Javanese mechanisms in music making processes, I will illustrate the complex subtleties that often characterize fluid boundaries between variation and improvisation to guide real time music making.

Christina Roland is an undergraduate in the Music Department at the University of California, San Diego. She has done work in critical studies, ethnomusicology, and percussion performance. She recently returned from Indonesia, where she spent ten months studying and Central Javanese Gamelan. She gratefully acknowledges the inspiration and encouragement from George Lipsitz, George Lewis, Marnie Dilling, Nancy Guy, Steven Schick, and Terry Longshore.

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## Improvisation, Time and Consciousness

Ed Sarath, Associate Professor and Chair. Department of Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation. The University of Michigan School of Music

Improvisation is often defined as an accelerated form of musical composition. In other words, the improviser, in a single creative episode, is thought to engage in the same creative strategies as the composer who generates and develops ideas over often-long stretches of time. In this paper, I will present an alternative viewpoint which I believe reveals insights into the improvisation process as well as illuminates aesthetic principles unique to improvised music. The essence of my theory, which first appeared in the *Journal of Music Theory* (40.1, 1996) is that improvisation and composition may be distinguished in the contrasting types of temporal conception they employ. The composer (who as defined here works in a discontinuous, stop-time format) conceives of time in what I call an "expanding" modality, where any given point is connected to its past and future, culminating in a conception of a piece as a whole. The improviser, on the other hand, conceives of time in what I call an "inner-directed" manner, where the localized present is magnified, and where relationships to what has already been played, and what might follow, are subordinated. Subcategories of inner-directed conception are also possible which allow for long-range strategies in improvisation, although these will be shown to differ intrinsically from the way those strategies are employed by composers. Possible points of intersection between certain types of composition and improvisation are also accommodated in this theory.

Temporality is not only significant in distinguishing composition and improvisation

processes, it also points to important aesthetic differences in composed and improvised musics. I present a model which parallels inner-directed conception to the self-referential, transcendent states commonly cited in Eastern thought (e.g. Vedantic, Buddhist traditions). This model may explain the transcendent states improvisers commonly claim occur during peak performances; it may also shed light on the interactive aspects of improvised music by suggesting that the melding of the influences of players, listeners and performance environment can be traced, through a complex systems perspective, to the temporal processes of the improviser.

Ed Sarath--Flugelhornist, Composer and Associate Prof of Music and Chair, Department of Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation, The University of Michigan. Recordings as leader on Owl Records, Konnex Records, with Joanne Brackeen, David Liebman, Billy Hart, Cecil McBee, Marvin Smitty Smith, Harvie Swartz, Mick Goodrick. Sarath appears regularly with the French ensemble Cache Cache, and has performed and offered master classes throughout the U.S., Europe and Brazil. His composition for jazz orchestra, "Rites of Passage", commissioned by the International Association of Schools of Jazz, was premiered in Cologne, Germany last April, with David Liebman and Michael Brecker as guest soloists. He has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, in performance and composition, and from the American Council of Learned Societies to support his work in the area of music and consciousness. His articles have appeared in *Jazz Changes*, *Jazz Research Papers*, *International Journal of Music Education*, and the *Journal of Music Theory*.

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## **Improvisation Beyond the Baroque: A Case of Historical Amnesia**

Angeles Sancho-Velázquez University of California Los Angeles

Western Classical music is generally considered an unlikely setting for improvisation. When the presence of improvisation within this tradition is acknowledged it is mostly in the context of "Early music." Improvisation, however, continued to be an important aspect of Western music until well into the nineteenth century. In the Romantic period in particular, this practice acquired a special status because it was associated with the creator's unmediated inspiration and was considered a privileged expression of the Romantic ideal of freedom of imagination. Improvisation played an important role in the careers of Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Chopin and it was praised by Hegel who considered it the "peak of musical activity."

Why, then, is improvisation generally considered foreign to the Western tradition? This conception originated no earlier than the second half of the nineteenth century, a time when a substantial part of the body of works that form the Western canon had already been written. In this period not only did improvisational practices suddenly disappear but also, strangely, all memory of the importance of the practice up to that time seems to vanish. To gain an insight into the conditions behind this case of apparent historical amnesia would, I think, help us better understand our own received ideas about Western music and, maybe, move beyond them.

Angeles Sancho-Velázquez is a Ph.D. candidate in Systematic Musicology at the University of California, Los Angeles and is currently at work on a dissertation on the decline of improvisation in western classical music. She has a background in philosophy, piano, and music education and has taught solfège and music theory at the Royal Conservatory of Music of Madrid, Spain. She wrote her master's thesis on Schoenberg's "emancipation of the dissonance" and in published articles and conference papers has written on theoretical problems in post-colonial ethnomusicology and cross-cultural aesthetics, the performances of Diamanda Galas, and the myth of the femme fatale in Richard Strauss's *Salome*.

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## **From "The Moment As Teacher" (excerpt)**

LaDonna Smith

Vibrating in the moment, we are our own teachers. Music is the grand extension of the inner vibrations of the soul. As our soul vibrates, our mind and bodies respond with their own movements.

Musical improvisation is an activity of finding an inner joy, release, freedom, pleasure, the place of no restraints, no rules, no conventions; but touching, sensing, feeling, allowing, and noticing through exploration of sounds with an instrument or voice. It is a delving into the possibilities of the unknown through initiation of movement which creates sound, and following the 'moment' with attention, or abandon. From this point of awareness rises emotion, recreation, and inspiration. It is the freedom to form a new vibration rising from the soul to make outer evidence from inner ambience.

The message here is the taking over of the ownership of one's soul and its expression through the invention of one's own music. To do this, one must shed the skins of past accomplishments and live in the moment, like a beginner. Let all notes fall where they may!

Given the license to be right by being wrong, awareness and attention to changing conditions creates the deposition of discovery, and therefore, at the same time, learning. It is only through the Self, vibrating in the moment, that we truly learn; when we notice, when we discover the great "Ah ha!" The important thing to remember is that the music is within us.

Raw experience is the greatest teacher.

[Click here to see LaDonna Smith's bio.](#)

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## **Articulating Intercultural Free Improvisation**

Jason Stanyek

In 1993 the British saxophone player Evan Parker was asked by the promoters of the third Phonomanie festival in Ulrichsberg, Austria to organize some performances which would reflect the theme of that year's event: die Fremde (the strange, the foreign). In response to the request Parker managed to assemble a remarkably diverse group of free improvisors: Jin Hi Kim, a Korean player of the komungo (a zither played by striking it with a piece of bamboo); George Lewis, an African-American trombonist and computer musician; Thebe Lipere, a South African percussionist and player of the imbumbu (an African didjeridoo); Carlo Mariani, an Italian player of the traditional Sardinian launeddas (a polyphonic reed instrument played by using circular breathing.); Sainkho Namchylak, a vocalist from Tuva; Walter Pratti and Bill Vecchi, two electronic musicians from Milan; Motoharu Yoshizawa, a bass player/vocalist from Japan. In 1996 Leo Records, a small British label, issued a CD recording of selected pieces from the four

sets that were performed over the two days.

The paper that I have written on this particular intercultural collaboration grew out of interviews I conducted with four of the eight musicians who participated in the Synergetics project (Evan Parker, Thebe Lipere, Jin Hi Kim and George Lewis). I use their insights and perceptions to help me untangle some of the more difficult issues surrounding intercultural music making: globalization (cultural imperialism, Westernization, hybridity, the global/local debate); how power is deployed within musical communities; questions regarding authenticity and how various musics come to be "essentialized" in different ways. I also look at the complex identities of the performers and how their particular subjectivities and senses of "place" are affected by the collaboration process.

In this paper I also contend that free improvisation is less a type of music with a definable sound-scape than it is a set of strategies deployed by musicians to engender a very inclusive space for music making. And, insofar as these strategies privilege the dialogic, the heterogeneous, the spontaneous and the incommensurable, I suggest that free improvisation provides a particularly fertile and distinctive space for intercultural music making.

Jason Stanyek was born in Brooklyn, New York and attended Brooklyn College where he studied composition with Tania León, computer music with Charles Dodge and guitar with Michael Cedric Smith. Before coming to UCSD in 1992 he spent two years working with H. Wiley Hitchcock and Paul Echols on the catalogue raisonné of the works of Charles Ives. He received his MA in composition from UCSD in 1995 (his principal teachers were Roger Reynolds and Brian Ferneyhough) and is currently finishing his Ph.D. in the Critical Studies and Experimental Practices program (his advisor is George Lewis). Besides writing his dissertation on intercultural collaborations he is active as a composer and an improviser (his group's first CD, *Unbalancing Act*, has just been released on the Nine Winds Label).

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## **The Creative Music Studio: A Unique Cross-Cultural Community of Improvisers, Product of a Unique Time and Place**

Bob Sweet (author of *Music Universe*, *Music Mind: Revisiting the Creative Music Studio*, Woodstock, New York) <http://www.arborville.com>

The Creative Music Studio, founded in 1971 by Karl Berger and Ornette Coleman, drew many of the world's leading improvisers to the idyllic locale of Woodstock, New York, in the years before CMS folded in 1984. This paper argues that the key factors of time and place are what allowed CMS to flourish, and that it is doubtful that the unique and influential community that it comprised could have existed at any other time or place.

The paper examines the history of Woodstock as a cultural, artistic, and spiritual focal point; the influence of the times on American improvisers and improvising traditions; the ability of CMS to draw so many master improvisers from around the world; and the effect of this confluence on the burgeoning "world music" movement.

Bob Sweet is a drummer, who, having grown up in Detroit, was for many years thoroughly immersed in the culture and tradition of the city's jazz community. He spent time in Roy Brooks' Aboriginal Percussion Choir, and for years played around the state of Michigan in rock, Greek, funk, jazz, and even country groups. In 1976 his musical horizons exploded when he discovered the Creative Music Studio. His experiences there with the likes of Jack DeJohnette, Ed Blackwell, Karl Berger, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Nana Vasconcelos, and many other great improvisers inspired him to write the book *Music*

*Universe, Music Mind: Revisiting the Creative Music Studio, Woodstock, New York.* Today, Bob continues to study and explore music while employed as the head of the library at the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute.

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## **Blind Data: Improvising Across Boundaries in Cuba**

W. Andrew Schloss, University of Victoria

The gap between Cuban music and computer music seems vast. However, during a recent extended visit to Cuba, during which I was studying traditional Afro-Cuban music, I had the good fortune to experiment in an extraordinary context: an improvisatory duo with maestro Chucho Valdés. Valdés is the legendary Cuban pianist, composer, band leader, and founder of the groundbreaking Cuban ensemble Irakere, that has launched the careers of numerous Cuban musicians like Paquito d'Rivera and Arturo Sandoval.

The opportunity to perform with Maestro Valdés was a great honor. But in this case, I was not "sitting in" with Chucho or with his Grupo Irakere. Rather, we both agreed to try to improvise in territory new to both of us. In this paper, I will discuss the relationships between two distinct modalities of improvisation: Afro-Cuban jazz on the one hand, and on the other, "virtual instruments" like the Radio Drum, which depends in part on computer programs to determine its behavior. It is a unique experience, because the aesthetics and demands of computer music are typically so different from the expectations and cultural context of Cuban music. But it was a successful experiment. During the talk, I will play excerpts from a live concert with Chucho Valdés, to illustrate concretely what the musical results of this experiment really were.

Andrew Schloss, percussionist, composer and researcher has taught at Brown University, the University of California at San Diego, and since 1990 at the University of Victoria. In 1988, he was awarded a Fulbright grant to conduct research at IRCAM, during which time he tested, refined and employed the Radio Drum. In 1993, Schloss was elected a fellow of the British Columbia Advanced Systems Institute, the first time this has been awarded to a researcher in the Fine Arts. His research and performance with "intelligent musical instruments" is widely recognized, and he is currently performing extensively on this new instrument; he has been called a virtuoso on this new instrument by its inventors. Schloss's research and composition in computer music have been presented in North and South America, and in Europe at various festivals. He has performed as a percussionist in many situations, such as on Broadway in New York, and with Peter Brook's production of "The Conference of the Birds." He has recently performed with legendary Cuban pianist Chucho Valdés in Cuba and Canada.

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## **I Nyoman Wenten's Merapi: Investigating Cultural Boundedness Through Improvisation**

Ann Warde, Composition/Theory Division, University of Illinois

I Nyoman Wenten's 1996 composition Merapi, for Balinese gamelan gong kebyar ensemble and solo improvisers, emphasizes the role of specific performers (in contrast to specific instruments and sounds) in an investigation of the notion of cultural boundedness. By incorporating a variety of non-Balinese improvisers into a traditionally constructed Balinese composition, a mix of musical elements secures Balinese music as

the framework for the composition: other musics clearly exist within a carefully constructed Balinese context. The composition invites performers of non-Balinese music to participate through reliance on their own musical backgrounds and traditions. The musicians are placed in a situation which causes them to acknowledge differences between musical systems, but which at the same time allows each to remain for the most part within the boundaries of her or his own distinct system. In this way Merapi avoids the creation of a situation in which the boundaries of specific genres are themselves questioned. Rather, through juxtaposing different musics, and through careful consideration and use of elements which may be shared between the musics without a radical departure from traditional performing methods, Merapi addresses the performers' sense of cultural boundedness. Moreover, performers (and listeners) are not asked to directly confront and question their sense of cultural definition from an individual perspective; Merapi creates an environment in which new information concerning the notion of one's own cultural boundedness results from a shared process of musical performance.

Works by composer and pianist Ann Warde include electroacoustic pieces as well as music for gamelan instruments. Performances of her compositions include presentations at ICMC98, the Bang on a Can Festival and by the Composers' Forum. She was a winner in the West German Radio's Forum for Young Composers, held in Cologne in 1992, and her work has been supported by several grants. Her compositions are published by Material Press, Frankfurt, Germany. She holds degrees from the University of Michigan and Wesleyan University, and is currently completing a DMA at the University of Illinois.

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## **The 'Doina'**

Robert Zelickman

My topic will cover the improvisatory elements in klezmer music. I will focus on the roots of the 'Doina,' a rhapsodic improvised solo that is performed by Klezmer instrumentalists. As I trace the historical development of this music, I will perform examples of this improvised style.

Robert Zelickman has been instructor of clarinet and a member of SONOR at the University of California, San Diego since 1983. Robert has been the director of the UCSD Wind Ensemble since 1992. He is a member of the San Diego Chamber Orchestra. Besides classical and contemporary music, Robert's other true passion is playing Klezmer Music. He is the co-founder of the "Second Avenue Klezmer Ensemble". The group started in 1991 and has since made two recordings. The ensemble has received a California Arts Council Touring Grant. Robert also lectures on the history of Klezmer Music at UCSD.

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## improvising across borders:

An inter-disciplinary symposium on improvised music

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### Concert Information

**Both concerts will take place at the Spruce St. Forum, which is located at 301 Spruce Street, San Diego CA 92103, phone: (619) 295-0301, fax (619) 295-3531. Concerts are \$12 each, or \$20 for both. See the Spruce St. [website](#) for further information.**

We are very grateful that these artists have graciously agreed to appear on these concerts, and we would also like to thank Bonnie Wright and the Spruce St. Forum for providing the space for this, and for creating a space for improvised music here in San Diego.

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#### Friday, April 9, 1999, at 8 pm: Opening concert featuring

- [Edwin Prévost](#)
- [LaDonna Smith](#)
- [J.D. Parran](#)
- [Douglas Ewart](#)
- [Susan Allen](#)

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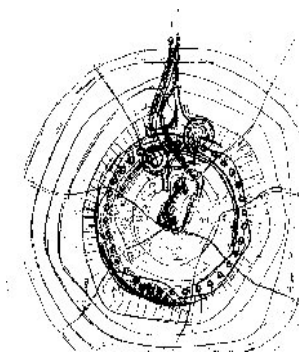
#### Saturday, April 10, 1999, at 8 pm:

Featuring [Pauline Oliveros](#)

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**Postlude:** Although not officially part of the symposium, there will be a concert of improvised music on Sunday night at 8 pm in Mandeville Recital Hall (UCSD) by the improvising quartet "Unbalancing Act," featuring Pat O'Keefe, clarinet; Jason Stanyek, guitar; Scott Walton, bass; and Glenn Whitehead, trumpet. The group recently released their first CD, "Unbalancing Act," on the Nine Winds label, and the concert is free to symposium participants.





## Improvising Across Borders

### *the symposium on improvisation*

~a review and personal account~

by LaDonna Smith

It has taken a long time to digest exactly "what happened" at the historic meeting of scholars, educators and improvisation practitioners at the 1999 "Improvising Across Borders" symposium, brainchild of Dana Reason, hosted by University of California in San Diego. One thing is certain, in terms of discussion of the phenomena of improvisation, it's practice, it's history, it's implication on sociological relationships in multi-dimensional and intercultural musics, borders were not boundaries but quite the opposite: borders



George Lewis greets Tom Nunn, Ingrid Monson looks on at the reception, April 11, 1999 at UCSD.

were diving boards upon which to enter the waters of meaning, relationships, and creativity. One purpose of the Symposium was to explore one of the most previously slighted, but critically important fundamentals in music creativity and it's true role in the shaping of musical traditions, styles, and current direction. The collective of panelists, artists, skeptics and practitioners merged their minds as well as their hearts in one of the most important meetings of the decade, to break down barriers and create dialog acknowledging improvisation as the true process to the imagination, and the common thread in all

music.

For a complete synopsis of the subjects, explorations, and dissertation the abstracts of the papers are currently still located at <http://man104nfs.ucsd.edu/~mdessen/csep/abstracts.html> I suggest that genuinely interested parties print the entire 20 pages, sit down with a cup of tea or coffee, and read through each and every abstract to fully begin to digest in thumbnail sketch the magnitude and vast diversity of the subjects considered at this symposium, an undoubtedly overdue, but nevertheless magnificent bringing together of experts and sympathetic souls of the process.

Even more eloquent than the papers themselves were the lively discussions that followed in the panels where thought processes were shared freely in the moment. As well, the featured concerts, in which the process, and results of the process, was demonstrated through music improvisation which crossed the borders in time from music to theater, to poetry, and to movement. And certainly, as these 'Moments' communicated loudly the impact of pure psychic musical automatism, the oracle of musical deliverance, the precious moments of shared witness were seen, heard, & felt on many levels in our recognition.

In short, we all arrived at the Symposium with our conceptualizations and contributions to share, with our minds and ears open to see and hear and exchange. We all left the Symposium, perhaps, as our primal leaders would leave the circle of peace in attitude of

acknowledgement. In respect, in hope, in commitment for greater and continued understanding acknowledging the significance of the art of improvisation as the tool of human creativity. To permeate, to draw from the collective consciousness, the powers of creation, through which the great diversity of many minds, many hearts, and many hands bring meaningful experience; that is, thought, feeling, and process.

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It was impossible to hear every speaker as papers were being delivered simultaneously in several locations. I will just bring out a sampling of a few of the significant remarks in the papers that I was able to hear in what was an overwhelming experience and saturation of improvisational hypothesis and information.



Guest with Douglas Ewart, Ajay Heble and Douglas Al-Maini

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Particularly interesting to me was the report from Bob Boster on "Tablecore" which is a term he used to characterize a type of musical trend occurring which is the creative offspring of a younger generation of amateur music experimenters. What he had to offer was an extremely important example of the activity of today's youth. Engendering a direction away from the market control of youth, and towards a community of musical experimentation with a do-it-yourself aesthetic. Challenging from the hard-core rock scene to the amateur production of techno, noise, industrial, electro-acoustic, ambient, and home-made, sometimes "experimental", and non-idiomatic practice of improvisation, which is outside the idiom of jazz. These youth are doing *solely for the soul of playing for one's pleasure*, an underground bedroom music.

The music exists largely on the internet, and through 'tape trades', facilitated by internet communications. Most of the kids are active in other artistic activities. The practitioners range from true improvisation to pieces through composed by samples of other people's work, or created entirely on the computer keyboard as elements in a game.

Bob Boster states as well as poses the question, "These are youthful amateur practitioners and hobbyists. *Is it appropriate for an "outsider" art such as this not to be looked at* as much as the contemporary & academic forms of expression as a historic barometer of our times?" Hobbyists and informal art production is often ignored. The Entertainment Industry pressure is trying to foster a consumptive audience. In the face of the pressure to shut up and consume, these kids have to do this! The work of these kids is a resource and inspiration for *cultural action!*

Bob Boster has conducted a survey of "Youth Tablecore" on the technical methods, generic association, improv vs. compositional methods, and outcomes expected from the kids and their output. He has compiled a number of email address and websites of kids involved in this music revolution. His work is extremely significant in recognizing the role of creativity and artistic expression in the every day lives of ordinary human individuals, especially the youth, and is an indicator of the potential social direction that can be spawned by *listening to the voices outside and beyond our own!* These are the voices of RIGHT NOW. This is not a study of a significant musical & social movement of the past, but one of the present and future.

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Also, I found that in spite of the long and foreboding titles of many of the papers, most of the content was down to earth and engaging. One such was David Borgo's *The Art of Juggling and Thinking about the Laundry*: Evan Parker, Embodiment, and Enactive Cognition. Now, how's that for a title? At any rate, Borgo related many fine points that were easy to hear coming from the master saxophonist Evan Parker's mouth over his own playing approach, and spoke loudly to my own inspiration and spirit. I'll share a few here.

...Parker linking his own musical results from tongue, breath, and fingers

to create an illusion of polyphony on a monophonic instrument, a hyper-extension of the biological level of playing, which also includes circular breathing, recognizing that "the techniques are not the substance of the music, but its enabling factor." -E. Parker

...that the notes and the music are like the spokes of a spinning wheel. When it is moving, you can't count all of them, but they fit together and generate by their speed, the overall blur of vision, slur into harmony/polyphony. The music is NOT what you hear in an analysis. It's what you hear in the real time experiment. -D. Borgo

...like juggling, which is balancing objects and gravity, there are skills and risks involved.

Listening to bodily functioning taking over the music: the fingers, larynx, breathing, the mind in trance.

Borgo proposes the notion of the concept of *Embodiment* as including the body function. Going away from objective analysis embodied in history and shared psychological experience grounded in culture, into an experience of permanence and flux, process and reality, Borgo states that a circular causality doesn't explain the linear thrust that history gives us. As Evan Parker just puts it, "This is a new day, but it's got a lot in common with the day before."

Borgo refers to the dialectics from Cage's "Sound is just sound" vs. an African-American philosophy that "Interactions are personal and have meaning..." and proposes that the music of Evan Parker as an example of the bridging of the two.

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Another paper, which I thought really stood out, almost evangelically for our age, was that of **Jason Stanyek**, *Articulating Intercultural Free Improvisation*. His paper based on interviews with participants of the Synergetics project included a diverse group of free improvisors from multi-dimensional and multi-cultural experience. In Stanyek's highly engaging discourse attempting to untangle some of the issues surrounding globalization and the notion of intercultural music making, he contends the notions of "intercultural" vs. "cultural is explaining nothing, just labeling. That sonic musical identity is not connected to a narrative origin, or a dehumanization of human sound. It is not connected with idioms, and he notes the violence that naming does to music and her ability to construct her own identity. That diversity is her best characteristic, making no limiting of musical richness. Stanyek concludes that free improvisation is "less a type of music with a definable sound-scape than it is a set of strategies deployed by musicians to engender a very inclusive space for music making." He furthermore, in exploring how power is employed within musical communities, (cultural imperialism, the global/local dichotomies) makes a grand case that due to its inclusive character, its openness, and recognition of diverse elements, that the practice of free improvisation provides a particularly fertile space for intercultural music making.

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Of course, speaking of **diversity**, there was no limit to the range of subjects covered in the Symposium, everything from Improv & Technology, to discussions of Ornette and Bach, to "Jazz, the State Department and Africa". At least, an attempt to video-document each proposition and discussion was made by the Symposium staff. Perhaps in the future, a more inclusive account of the research and perceptions held will be forthcoming. To me, however, the mixing of musicians and scholars in the open forum discussions, which followed the papers, were even more inspiring and useful than the hypotheses and studies.

The following are just a few of the highlights from my notes of the lively panel discussions, which generated an enormous wakefulness in the halls. With communication through human conversation so stimulating, there should no excuse for the dulling of human intelligence through the habitual and inane watching of television broadcasts, commonly referred to as "entertainment". (...I like to think of the atmosphere of an old fashioned English round-table pub, no disco, no loudspeakers masking the silence, a good beer and a good conversation.) These are excerpts from some of the

discussions, and are examples of what the epitome of human entertainment can rise to. Please be aware that they are not necessarily direct quotes, as the speakers *always* are ahead of my hand. But I tried to catch what I could... In lively discussion, we can *simultaneously* think, have fun, be entertained, inspire, and enrich.

- [Sarita McCoy Gregory](#), who gave a wonderful lecture on cultural and political implications of improvised music, makes the claim that spontaneous music is perhaps based on nothing, and proposes the question, "Is this musical memory or musical amnesia?"
- [Eddie Prevost](#) asserts that for him, in England, improvisation emerged as an *alienation* factor, "How do we make a meaningful space out of our culture?"
  - [Jonathan Glasier](#): I see the improviser as a wholistic musician...
  - [Tom Nunn](#): Our tradition is imagination. For instance, how about a one hour concert on a coffee table?
  - [Dana Reason](#): We come from different points of history and experience, but improvisation allows *any* entry level, building community, and you can enter without losing your tradition or your identity.



Eddie Prevost with Symposium organizer, Dana Reason.

- A discussion of the "next concert hall" being the web comes up. Pauline Oliveros mentions to everyone to check out [www.turbulence.org](http://www.turbulence.org) and that on April 18, there will be a web improvisation.
- A discussion about the kids, the legacy and future of jazz, the Tablecore aspect, the aspect that kids ideas will always be different from the parents...
- [Alvin Curran](#): these utopias have bobbed up on the sea of whatever. In living off of the alternative during the 60's, we created a tradition...and this tradition is in peril. Not only is it on a collision course with technology, which may be just England being behind....or whatever...but because of the enormous global strategies that are present in our society, the category of artists, musicians, and thinkers is endangered. We are an endangered species.
- [Douglas Ewart](#): We must infect the children in such a way that we won't have to worry about it...tradition or a true current in musical practice.
- [Alvin Curran](#): Think about the facts about the millennium, and the end of this century. We are leaving this amazing century where the most horrible things in history happened. And where the most amazing human feats also occurred...
- [Chris Williams](#) (student): When I heard "Improvisation Across Borders", I thought, "shouldn't we just grab an instrument and go down to the border right now!" ....Like building community, we're interested in the language of access, privilege, breaking down the walls, looking for ways to combat the realities...
- [Ron Robroy](#): Even in the most tightly composed pieces, there are a multitude of insurrections going on. Leadership is ceded to another voice. And, there's the allusion of breathing.
- [Benneta Jules Rosette](#): African art, writing and Music is based on improvisation. But here's the question, "What's on your mind when you're playing your music?" I explore, "what's on his mind?" Speaking as a sociologist, improvisation becomes a social necessity for people that are struggling, whether it is in a style of hip hop, african, or paris blend. Improvisation is a code of life. The necessity to improvise is an absolute survival technique to organize the code of minority people with the code of dominant cultures

(there was a break in which bagels of all sorts were offered with coffee and California teas)

The second discussion panel began with introductory remarks from each of the participants before open discussion commenced. By this time, I was really fatigued from writing, so the memories are even more fragmented, but here goes:

- [David Antin](#): (after a moving and hilarious account in celebration of the artistic life at its center, improvisation has the ability to attend to every circumstance) "....why shouldn't we invent as well as we can...Go on! Make it perfect! Instead of the attitude of...invent as well as you can under the circumstances. Most situations are available to do something in a human context, if you can get to a human context.

- Mchaka Uba: ...you know, in those days people didn't refer to us as African-Americans. People have referred to us as 'afro-this or that'. When I was growing up an Afro was a hairstyle! Words have meaning. Talk is cheap, and people talk in their sleep. They say, "A picture is worth a thousand words." Now picture this! When I was in Chicago some many years ago,



and I was in a bad-ass gang, you know, that's where it was at, to be, then. Well, we used to see George...motioning towards George Lewis)... We used to see "little" George going down the street,...with his trombone....I was an old man then, and he was just a little boy....going down the street... to the University of Chicago.... And I thought to myself, "We should go down there and "kick that little fat boy's ass!" But something told me.... ? And NOW! Well. Now, I know .... that George can kick ANYBODY's ass in here! (laughter) (Mchaka Uba pulls an empty vodka bottle out of his back pocket) "You know, I've been thinkin about drinkin..." He introduced his wife. And at this point a taped musical interlude was presented with her singing a moving rendition over his delicious improvisational bass solo, "I've been thinking about drinking ...those blues away," which was a testament to how music can move the souls of everyone in the room.



Guests with Pauline Oliveros and George Lewis

- Catherine Sullivan, coming to us from the discipline of theater, began her presentation citing the problems with improvisation as pertaining only to her discipline, theater. She acknowledged its use as a means of developing material, saying that it was difficult to isolate the task of an actor, and that for an actor improv is considered to be the domain of "genius". The tools of an actor are emotional and psychological, and that their instrument is very different. That there is a need to "master". The work of it is in honing a sensitivity of people in a more democratic situation. She had questions as to whether improv was a cultural necessity or an artistic necessity, and as to "what is finally produced?". Furthermore, she asks, "is improv a fetish-i-zation of spontaneity? Is it anti technique? Does it have conventions and formulas?" I got the impression that she had never worked with improvisation as a serious art form, and was in fact, afraid of it.

- Eleanor Antin, a conceptual artist and actress did much better with subversive activities, exploits and improvisational experiments! Concerning the issue of traditions and spontaneity, she had no problem with it. It was a matter of bringing it together. To bring it together "in a flash!" She had been in a women's group where they brought objects together to work with. They would build and make things, act around them, reach several climactic moments, then achieve an ending. Everybody knew when the ending was. She also told many entertaining and stunning accounts of her disguising herself in anachronistic characters and walking through town interacting as a Shakespearean man among other things. This woman was a riot! We all laughed so hard that we were in stitches! I don't know who is the funniest, she or her husband, David Antin. As always happens when presentations are engaging and funny, time runs out.



Douglas Ewart and guest...

- At some point in the discussion session, David Antin brought up upon the question of memory and improvisation that "memory is like crossing the street". It's crucial to existence to remember to look both ways. You've got to have skill, memory brings that. But you have to learn....and remain open.

- Sociologist: "All of these are culturally learned practices. You are participating in a reproduction where nothing will be new."
- A teacher from the audience: "...But there has been in Massachusetts an educational standard, which Congress has just set as a National Standard for education, that "every child must improvise". If you give eight kids who are six years old a pipe, a water faucet, an instrument, the children

*WILL improvise. They will create a composition.*

- George Lewis (moderator): "We have brought up an enormous number of complex issues. We are in no way close to resolving, or even exploring those issues..."

So we ended the discussions, inspired, with keen interest and high emotions, much more to explore and to say, and....out of time.

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Finally, the Symposium had come to the moment we had all been waiting for...the keynote address to be given by Pauline Oliveros.

## Quantum Improvisation: The Cybernetic Presence

by  
[Pauline Oliveros](#)

Keynote address presented at the [Improvisation Across Borders](#) conference at University of California, San Diego April 11, 1999.

*Dedicated to the memory of Robert Erickson who encouraged us all to improvise.*

According to Ray Kurzweil in his new book *The Age of Spiritual Machines: When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence*:

*"In a hundred years there may be no clear distinction between humans and computers. There will be enormous augmentation of human perceptual and cognitive abilities through neural implant technology. Humans who do not use such implants are unable to participate in meaningful dialogue with those who do - knowledge is understood instantaneously through assimilated knowledge protocols. The goal of education and intelligent beings is discovering new knowledge to learn."*

*The speculations for the future in the Kurzweil book and others concerning self aware machines with the ability to reproduce into future generations with patterns of matter and energy that can perpetuate themselves and survive set me wondering. It's already evident that computers and human intelligence are merging. What would I want on a musician chip if I were to receive the benefit of neural implant technology? What kind of a 21st Century musician could I be? Humans with the aid of technology already see and hear far beyond the capability of the unaided senses. It's not long according to Kurzweil when such aids will be available at the personal level as implants like personal computers or digital assistants. All of us improvisers could have new input from this and new challenges. I'll return to the question of my musician chip after looking back a hundred years for some reminders and highlights:*

*The first magnetic recording came in 1899. One hundred years ago - Sound is recorded magnetically on wire and a thin metal strip. By 1900 The Gramophone Company advertised a choice of 5000 recordings. The human desire to record - to replicate and preserve resulted in 52,000 CD Titles produced in 1998!*

*Early Jazz Improvisation emerged after the civil war and emancipation. Improvisation developed in parallel with radio broadcast and recording technology. It is not surprising that all styles and forms of improvisation from historical to free have been empowered by recording. Recording is the memory and documentation of improvisation and testifies to an enormous creative effort by innumerable musicians. Musicianship for written forms of music has been empowered by recording as well.*

*The African aesthetic imposed on American and European dance music leads to the decade of the birth of the Blues and blues influenced jazz - 1920-30. Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith mothered this music and rose to short lived stardom as Blues queens during the migrations from the South to Northern metropolitan centers. Horn players of innumerable bands followed the lead of Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith and other singers in a tremendous era of creativity and enterprize by people of African descent.*

*By 1930 60% of all American households have radios. Improvised music spreads out from recordings and radio broadcasts. Music by Americans of African descent is heard throughout the land and influences all of American music. This enormous creativity is recognized and appropriated by the white entertainment establishment. The black white exchange and interaction continues throughout the century and grows into the billion dollar music industry which exists today.*

*In 1953 the first consumer model Tape Recorders are available. This meant that musicians could record themselves at home or in their studios - a sound mirror is available to use anytime. Musicianship escalated with the aid of technology. Today's musicians are phenomenal in their performance skills in all styles of music improvised and written.*



Currently another wave of creativity originating from 1970's Hip Hop sweeps world youth culture - influencing the whole world. All recordings are sources for improvisation. Rather than frozen historical objects recordings become live material through DJ scratching and re-mixing.

Classical music as taught in American establishment institutions and conservatories regards improvisation as a kind of craft, subordinate to the more prestigious art of composition. It's well known that Mozart as well as Beethoven improvised on their tours. Improvisation as a lost art was excluded from the curriculum and all but disappeared in America except for church organists and occasional cadenzas in concertos. The denial of the validity of improvisation has a racist tinge and origin. In America in the first half of this century improvisation grew mostly from Jazz and Blues - heart music of Americans of African descent - the disenfranchised. After 1950 improvisation appears in white avant garde music through the influence of marginalized indeterminate or aleatoric procedures, exposure to Jazz and Blues and to recordings and live imports of non-Western music - also disenfranchised music.

What's the purpose of creating music in performance without reference to memory or written form - improvisation? The purpose varies according to the function of the music. One purpose is to enter into direct dialogue through sound with oneself and others. If the improvisation is creative then new mental and physical patterns could be born such as happened with Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor breaking away from Jazz traditions in the 50s and later Musica Electronica Viva, San Francisco Tape Music Center and AMN breaking away from classical music restrictions with improvisation. If the improvisation is historical such as replicating Charlie Parker, John Coltrane or the legacies of other great improvisers with no new elements then the purpose is to affirm a tradition.

The improvising musician has to let go of each moment and also simultaneously understand the implications of any moment of the music in progress as it emerges into being - In historical improvisation the course is charted or set by the conventions and codifications of the style - the Classicism of the music - In so called free improvisation nothing is known about the music before it happens - this edge is the challenge for human and for machine intelligence. Unless the styles of the musicians improvising were already absorbed by the machine then what information would there be to calculate a response? If the outcome is known in advance it is not free improvisation, it is historical improvisation.

What in fact does happen when a creative musician makes new music? How can it be new or free? What is it free of? What could be new about it? What is happening with a solo improvising musician? a group? The soloist gives herself feedback and enters a dialogue with herself and musical space - the group stretches the possibilities for dialogue and new relationships come about creating a myriad of new possibilities even though the course of the music - new as it may be - will flow with ineluctable inevitability. The recorded legacies of innumerable musicians are waiting to answer these questions.

What happens when a new musician chip is implanted in a human or a machine? All ranges are increased. Processing is possible beyond known present human capabilities. What could be heard? Could a new musical paradigm include a new spatial domain? Moments of local sound - moments of moving sound with the ability to detect locations from light years away - defining new interdimensional spatiality? What would a spatial melody sound like - a pitch beginning on Saturn moving to Aldeberon to Sirius to Earth? Space related frequency and amplitude - multidimensional melody - color/space /sound melody. Who would be playing this tune? Who would be listening and where? Melody across space stretched out and also happening everywhere simultaneously. Space is the place - I hear you Sun Ra!

According to the current issue of Scientific American in the article Is Space Finite by Luminet, Starkman and Weeks, "The universe may look infinitely large, but that could be an illusion. If space folds back on itself like the braids of a pretzel, it might be boundless, and light could spool around the cosmos endlessly.

The usual assumption is that the universe is, like a plane, simply connected, which means there is only one direct path for light to travel from a source to an observer. A simply connected Euclidean or hyperbolic universe would indeed be infinite. But the universe might instead be multiply connected, like a torus, in which case there are many different such paths. An observer would see multiple images of each galaxy and could easily misinterpret them as distinct galaxies in an endless space, much as a visitor to a mirrored room has the illusion of seeing a huge crowd."

What if we could sound out, hear and perceive the shape of the universe by bouncing sound around the torus? We don't have to be limited to the physical definitions of our perceptual ranges. What about imagination? Here is the challenge of the machine - the promise of hybrid human/machine forms through implants. The challenge of new beings with formidable powers of perception, memory, reasoning, and interpretation. Non carbon based beings created by humans to eventually replace humans. Are we creating new beings to replace humans or are we expanding our minds - making a quantum leap into the neo cortex to develop our own potential power?

In 1948 -Norbert Weiner coined the word "cybernetics" meaning the science of control and communication in the animal and machine. The cybernetic presence is definitely with us. Kurzweil says in his time line: "10 years from now (2009) human musicians routinely jam with cybernetic musicians" This is a shallow statement because there is no revelation concerning style, complexity or form. In fact many musicians are already improvising with machines programmed to respond to improvised input. Will Kurzweil's cybernetic musicians be self determining in 10 years?

In 1977 the first desktop computers from Apple are available. Musicians and Hobbyists continue to work out programs to make and play music now in their own studios away from Bell Labs, Princeton, Stanford and other institutions for computer music research.

*Improvisation is also developing and merging with new forms of interaction made possible by machine intelligence. Computers expand the reach of solo as well as group improvisers. The work of Laurie Spiegel, David Behrman, Warren Burt, Joel Chadabe, George Lewis, Elliott Sharp, Jim Tenny, Deep Listening Band, Chris Brown, The Hub and many others comes to mind.*

*By 1990 Computer hard disc recording and editing is available. A powerful and revolutionary combination - the merging of recording and computing. What a wonderful tool for the creative musician.*

*"In 20 years virtual musicians with their own reputations are emerging". We need to know what constitutes a musician. How will humans with or without implants compete or collaborate with the cybernetic presence? I don't feel comfortable with the notion of surgical implants. I hope that some non invasive reversible form may be available.*

*"30 years from now direct neural pathways for high bandwidth connections to the human brain perfected. There will be a range of neural implants to enhance auditory and visual perception and interpretation, memory and reasoning". What would be enhanced? What and how would such powers be measured and valued and by whom? What about imagination? What kind of improvisation could and inevitably will result?*

*Music and especially improvised music is not a game of chess - Improvisation especially free improvisation could definitely represent another challenge to machine intelligence. It won't be the silicon linearity of intensive calculation that makes improvisation wonderful. It is the non linear carbon chaos, the unpredictable turns of chance permutation, the meatiness, the warmth, the simple, profound, humanity of beings that brings presence and wonder to music.*

*We have looked one hundred years before and one hundred years ahead of this 1999 conference Improvisation Across Borders. Now for what I would want on my Musician Chip - what skills should the 21st Century musician have? What could she know?*

*In 1937 The Church-Turing Thesis stated that "All problems that humans can solve can be reduced to a set of algorithms, supporting the idea that machine intelligence and human intelligence are essentially equivalent".*

*Returning to the future Star Date 2336 we find a machine intelligence - minus human emotions that evidently don't reduce to a set of algorithms until lately - at work on the Star Ship Enterprise. Star Trek's android Lt. Commander Data is an imagining of the future predicted by the Church-Turing theory. Data solves problems and is a sentient life form with the same rights as other life forms. His ultimate storage capacity is 800 quadrillion bits and his total linear computation speed is 60 trillion operations per second. Data can remember every fact he is exposed to and can imitate voices so perfectly that he can even fool the computer of the Enterprise into thinking he is someone else. Star Trek's Data has performed as a classical musician on several episodes. His classical musician chip allows him to perform any music superbly having absorbed all known styles and all available recorded interpretations of written music. The musician who learns to perform classic forms and idioms is a conservative who affirms and preserves tradition. All of known music could be listened to, absorbed analyzed and interpreted by machine intelligence and be contained on a chip.*

*The composer is an organizer who designs and formalizes music prior to performance through notation. Computers already aid a variety of composer's design calculations. Computers can engage in rule based composition, calculate and realize musical forms.*

*Experiments in Musical Intelligence by David Cope describes the basic principles of analysis, pattern matching, object orientation and natural language processing. This system makes it possible to generate new compositions in the styles of various composers, from Bach and Mozart to Prokofiev and Scott Joplin. The program SARA (Simple Analytic Recombinant Algorithm) produces new compositions in the style of the music in its database. Already audiences are hard put to tell what music is composed by a human and what is composed by a machine All known styles of composition could be contained on the composer chip.*

*Data could certainly handle all known styles of composition and historical improvisation. Improvisor: is a computer program that creates original music, written by Paul Hodgson, a British Jazz saxophone player. Improvisor can emulate styles ranging from Bach to Jazz greats Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker - historical improvisation. What about the improvising musician as an evolutionary? What would an improviser chip have to include for Data as a machine intelligence to engage in free improvisation? To boldly go where no musician has gone before sounding through dimensions of space - of time? Finding new sounds and new sound relationships?*

*Data could probably analyze all known instruments for instrument makers, all performance abilities for performers and all known musical forms for composers. The edge though is the unknown of imagination for performers, improvisers, composers and instrument makers and the unification of all these roles.*

On my musician chip I would like the:-

- Ability to recognize and identify instantaneously any frequency or combination of frequencies in any tuning, timbre in any tempo or rhythm, in any style of music or sound in any space.
- Ability to produce any frequency or sound in any tuning, timing, timbre, dynamic and articulation within the limits of the selected instruments or voices used. Maybe I would also like to morph from any instrument to any other instrument or voice. at will.
- Ability to recognize, identify and remember any music - its parts as well as the whole no matter the complexity.
- Ability to perceive and comprehend interdimensional spatiality.
- Ability to understand the relational wisdom that comprehends the nature of musical energy - it's form, parts and underlying spirituality - as the music develops in performance.
- Ability to perceive and comprehend the spiritual connection and interdependence of all beings and all creation as the basis and privilege of music making.
- Ability to create community and healing through music making.
- Ability to sound and perceive the far reaches of the universe much as whales

sound and perceive the vastness of the oceans. This could set the stage for interdimensional galactic improvisations with yet unknown beings.

- I suppose it would be great to be able to print it all out as well in 3D color.

Are improvisers conscious? Do they have self perception, self awareness the ability to feel. What is conscious improvisation? For that matter what is unconscious improvisation? The body knows what to do even if the small mind does not comprehend. The body "dances" the music - the nerves fire and the mind notices slightly after it happens. Conscious improvisation involves strategy - responding strategically even if the outcome is unknown. A strategy of conscious improvisation might be - play only if you are listening - or trust the body to respond. This melds of course the notion of conscious/unconscious improvisation.

The capability of the human mind is unplumbed. We have far more capacity than we currently use in the neo cortex waiting for evolutionary expansion. Computers may actually instruct us in this process as we continue to merge with the machine intelligence that we are creating and improvisation interaction. We must decide though what a 50 year old structure of silicon is going to tell a five billion year old structure of carbon before making irreversible changes physically.

Quantum computing is a revolutionary method of computing based on quantum physics that uses the abilities of particles such as electrons to exist in more than one state at the same time. Quantum computation can operate simultaneously on a combination of seemingly incompatible inputs.

By analogy or metaphor Quantum Improvisation could mean a leap into new and ambiguous consciousness opening a new variety of choices. Ambiguous consciousness would mean the ability to perform in more than one mental state simultaneously in order to reach or bridge past and future as an expanding present. There could be new sound combinations anchored by increasing order even though choices might seem incompatible. Such a quantum leap could mean the utilization of more of the neo cortex the seat of creativity and problem solving. The newest part of the brain that is waiting to evolve in association with the limbic system - the amygdala - old brain and seat of the emotions. Quantum Improvisation could find new ways to express and understand the relationships between mind and matter.

Ordinarily we use only a relatively small percentage of the neo cortex - this reflects the style of most content oriented education in institutions, which limits or suppresses rather than encourages creative problem solving. After enormous growth spurts in the brain by age 16 many people are no longer interested in creativity. Education - content oriented education particularly - does not necessarily access the neo cortex - Rather there is the classic learning of forms - cortical learning - recognizable forms with no encouragement or support for innovation, which requires creative problem solving. This situation is particularly true of music. Performance of traditional music is rewarded and encouraged rather than acts of creation. Performance and creativity both could be rewarded and encouraged.

*What is needed now is a complete program - an Improvatory of Music for pre K through Post Doc in aural music including all forms of improvisation and aural traditions to complement conservatories. As soon as possible young children could be encouraged to improvise and create their own music. They could be introduced to sound gathering and listening strategies. This program would not replace traditional music learning but would complement, enhance and make it possible for all people to participate in creative music making. An Improvatory would necessarily be interdisciplinary and include all the arts and technology.*

*There exists now 100 years of recordings of the complete range of improvisation from historical to free. This is an ample documentation, that could yield many fruitful studies for advanced degrees. Improvisational strategies could be introduced early and advance through graduate levels. Here is one example of an improvisational strategy: "Only sound what has not been sounded before".*

*Once an improvisation has happened is recorded and studied it becomes historical. Too much replication can be destructive of creativity. Replication guarantees survival and perpetuation of form but It would be critical to hold the space for creative problem solving - An advanced problem to solve would be how to do this. Music teachers could encourage playing by ear as well as reading and writing music. The use of recording and computing could accelerate the learning of reading and writing music through intelligent courseware.*

*What would one learn at an Improvatory of Music?*

- *Basic listening skills including the listening effect. Music only happens with conscious listening.- Maybe quantum listening -*
- *Listening in more than one state simultaneously. If you are not listening the music is not happening. A conscious observer is necessary. Conscious observation affects sound.*
- *Ways of sounding and listening - strategies.*
- *Starting from scratch - Music by any means possible (i.e. bottle caps, found objects)*
- *Sound ecology - what happens in the environment?*
- *Sound gathering through recording*
- *Sound sensitivity*
- *Sound provision with live feeds from sonically stimulating environments such as ponds, oceans, natural soundscapes , the weather and many other sources including industrial and urban sites.*
- *Sound as intelligence.*
- *Relational techniques or relationality*
- *Relational organization*
- *Informality*
- *Egalitarian ethics*
- *Political structures*
- *Evolving open form processes*
- *Computing - Computers may push us or teach us about the mind and facilitate a quantum leap into unity of consciousness.*
- *Technology especially tools for expanding the mind through listening. Instrumental research and development*
- *Acoustics*
- *Psychoacoustics*
- *Organizational strategy*

*The place for an Improvatory requires an architecture that is supportive of the process - ideally. Chaos is a key resource in pushing evolution.- Meeting places might provide an appropriately chaotic environment with reconfigurable levels, color, textures, sonorous objects, acoustics, recording opportunities and open spaces. There could be many choices to make.*

*This conference - Improvising Across Borders - brings a new dignity to a creative activity, which has been marginalized by the Western, established musical order. It is time now for an inclusive curriculum where improvised music is no longer ignored or denigrated. Borders should not only be crossed, but should dissolve. Degrees in both aural and written musics should be available equally. Aural music informs written music and vice versa. Improvisation is a key process for creative problem solving and the expansion of mind that is needed to meet the challenge of the machine intelligence that we are creating. Improvisation is creative problem solving and is a portal to quantum thinking - thinking in more than one state simultaneously.*

*What is free improvisation? - nothing is known in advance of making the music. What's the algorithm for that condition? It may or may not be free of historical patterns or it may use historical patterns in new ways. Theoretically free improvisation is totally spontaneous like the big bang of creation. Maybe the big bang was the first and only free improvisation. Algorithms anyone? How about holding the possibility of the first unknown sound to begin an improvisation at an unknown time in a group of players who are all new to one another? Imagine then a crowd of creative people improvising together.*

*I thank the organizers for their courage and imagination.*

-Pauline Oliveros

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*Quantum Improvisation: The Cybernetic Presence*

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